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### ***published in***

Gender, Generation and Families in International Migration  
2011

[Link to publication in VU Research Portal](#)

### ***citation for published version (APA)***

van Walsum, S. K. (2011). Sex and the regulation of belonging. Dutch family migration policies in the context of changing family norms. In A. Kraler, E. Kofman, M. Kohli, & C. Schmoll (Eds.), *Gender, Generation and Families in International Migration* (pp. 43-58). Amsterdam University Press.

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# Gender, Generations and the Family in International Migration

ALBERT KRALER, ELEONORE KOFMAN,  
MARTIN KOHLI & CAMILLE SCHMOLL (EDS.)



Gender, Generations and the Family in International Migration

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# **Gender, Generations and the Family in International Migration**

*edited by Albert Kraker, Eleonore Kofman, Martin Kohli and  
Camille Schmoll*

IMISCOE Research

AMSTERDAM UNIVERSITY PRESS



Published with financial support from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science

Cover design: Studio Jan de Boer BNO, Amsterdam

Lay-out: Philos ®

Cover image: Omniafausta Grafisch Ontwerp, Utrecht

ISBN 978 90 8964 285 1

e-ISBN 978 90 4851 361 1

NUR 741 / 763

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Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2011

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## Preface

*Albert Kraller*

Over the past decade, family migration has moved to the centre of political debates on migration, integration and multiculturalism in Europe. This has occurred both in national contexts and at the European Union level. In a similar vein, academic interest in various family dimensions of international migration has grown considerably, forming them into a core concern of migration research at large. Not only is there a flourishing of specialised research projects, publications and conferences addressing family-related aspects of international migration, but such issues are also increasingly discussed in the context of other work not especially concerned with family migration.

This said, the observation a co-editor of this book made in a review of research on family migration more than seven years ago, that there has been little analysis of many of the relevant issues in the European context partly, still remains true today (Kofman 2004: 244). While no longer seen as a neglected field within migration studies in Europe, the different strands of research – including legal and policy analysis of family migration policies, anthropological research on family practices and identities in a transnational context and sociological analysis of macro-patterns of family forms and patterns – frequently stay quite separate from, and largely ignorant of, each other. In addition, and despite the quantitative relevance of families affected by international migration, the migration dimension of family forms, patterns and practices is still marginal in the field of mainstream family studies. Compartmentalisation of more general research on families and research on migrant families, specifically, is also reflected in official governmental reporting and monitoring practices. Frequently, separate reporting systems are in place when it comes to migrants. Furthermore, migration issues are often marginalised, if not altogether ignored, in general reports and monitoring on the situation of families.

Taking stock of what we know about the family dimensions of international migration and its patterns was one of our main objectives for this book. However, so was uniting different strands of research on the migrant family to allow them to speak to each other, or as one well-known edited volume on migration theory put it, ‘talking across disciplines’ (Brettell & Hollifield 2000). This book thus comprises contributions from political

scientists, lawyers, geographers, anthropologists, sociologists and social policy scholars using different methodologies and often a combination thereof, such as qualitative, quantitative, sociological and anthropological methods, legal and policy analysis and historical methods, to investigate a broad range of themes of international migration's family dimension. In this sense, our contributors have taken a significant step forward for a more inter-disciplinary and multidisciplinary understanding of family-related migration. Of course, family migration is too vast a topic to be comprehensively covered by any single volume. Similarly, the range of possible perspectives on family-related migration is too wide to be adequately reflected in a book like this. On both counts, we are acutely aware of our omissions and limitations, particularly regarding the more profound disciplinary divides, such as those between economists and social scientists or legal scholars and social scientists, or regarding the underdeveloped dialogue between historians and social scientists working on contemporary issues, which persists despite both scholars addressing very similar issues.<sup>1</sup>

A second concern we wanted to address is the state's role in influencing patterns of family-related migration and family practices, without limiting the volume to an analysis of family migration policies or normative debates around family-related migration, gender and citizenship. We also wanted to bring together different disciplinary aspects and analyses focusing on state policies and political debates on family-related migration alongside analyses addressing assumptions underlying or consequences following from state policies. Indeed, interest in the role of the state in family-related migration provided the immediate context in which the idea for a conference and subsequent volume based on its proceedings could emerge. In 2006, co-editors Eleonore Kofman at Middlesex University in London and Albert Kraler at the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) in Vienna engaged in a research project that investigated family migration policies and their impact in nine European states.<sup>2</sup> One of its broader goals was to move beyond a narrow legal and policy analysis of family migration policies, instead placing emphasis on the consequences of policies for the individuals and families affected by them. The research was based on small-scale qualitative studies of persons involved in family migration in six of the nine countries. From here, the interest in bringing together diverse strands of research on family-related migration emerged.

We originally intended to organise a conference primarily to disseminate the project's results, though also to solicit comments on our findings and engage in dialogue with other interested researchers. Parallel to this, we organised a number of smaller panels and workshops, notably in the framework of various IMISCOE Network of Excellence conferences,<sup>3</sup> where we presented studies in progress and invited others to present their

own work. For our own project, opening up the panels and workshops to others proved enormously fruitful. It fulfilled our need for broader contextualisation of our own research and its impact, thus embedding it in the wider research on family-related migration. Thus, rather than limiting our project conference exclusively to our own work, we decided to organise a conference with a broad focus on family-related migration, inviting contributions from a variety of disciplinary perspectives and research approaches. Martin Kohli and Camille Schmoll at the European University Institute (EUI) in Fiesole, Italy, complemented the organising committee and offered to host the conference at the EUI. A call for papers was launched in early 2007 and the Gender, Generations and the Family in International Migration conference was held in June that year.<sup>4</sup> The enthusiastic response to the call – with 40 abstracts submitted – confirmed that organising an interdisciplinary conference to ‘explore the various dimensions of the migrant family and link it to the stages in the life course, gender and generational relations, on the one hand, and the politics and policies around the migrant family, on the other’, as the call specified, met the needs and interests of many researchers. Ultimately, seventeen papers were selected and organised around seven themes.

The Robert Schuman Centre of Advanced Studies (RSCAS) at the EUI provided invaluable logistical assistance for the organisation of the conference and also contributed to its financing. The conference, however, would not have been possible without the generous financial contribution and encouragement from IMISCOE. The generous funding we received under the Austrian Ministry for Science and Research’s New Orientations in Democracy in Europe (NODE) programme enabled us not only to implement our own small-scale project, but also furnished the financial means to put the conference and, ultimately, the book project into practice.

For their valuable comments and encouraging us to pursue this publication, we wish to thank Rainer Bauböck, Jean-Pierre Cassarino, Virginie Guiraudon, Stéphanie Mahieu, Ettore Recchi and Sarah van Walsum who also served as chairs and discussants for the panels, alongside the conference organisers. Thanks are particularly due to the contributors to this volume, both those among the original conference participants who agreed to revise their contributions for publication and those who agreed to prepare additional pieces when we approached them. We thank all authors for their enthusiasm, the work they put into this and the many comments they shared with us and their fellow contributors. We are grateful for their patience and endurance during the four years we dealt with chapter preparation, comments on drafts and first versions, the peer-review process and the final revisions. We also wish to thank the IMISCOE Editorial Committee and, in particular, its managing editor, Karina Hof, for support during the final revisions and her patience when we once again had to ask for more time to finalise the manuscript. Finally, we thank the

three anonymous referees for their thorough reviews and the valuable comments that all helped improve and, at the same time, greatly encourage our work.

This volume is thus the result of a truly collective endeavour to which many individuals and institutions have contributed. Particular thanks go to Verena Platzer and Dieter Mayr at ICMPD for editing and formatting draft chapters, to Ranmal Burkmar at Middlesex University for proofreading and language editing.

## Notes

- 1 See Venken, Beyers and Goddeeris (2009) for an excellent interdisciplinary publication project that brings together contributions from historians and social scientists.
- 2 The project Civic Stratification, Gender and Family Migration Policies in Europe was implemented between 2006 and 2009 (Kraler 2010). It received funding from the New Orientations in Democracy in Europe (NODE) Research Programme of the Austrian Ministry for Science and Research and involved the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) in Vienna as coordinator and Middlesex University in London and the Austrian NGO MAIZ as research partners (for more information on the project, see <http://research.icmpd.org/1445.html>).
- 3 The panels and workshops were presented in sessions organised by IMISCOE Cluster B3 (Legal Status, Citizenship and Political Integration) and Cluster C8 (Gender, Age and Generations).
- 4 The Gender, Generations and the Family in International Migration conference was organised in cooperation with the IMISCOE Network of Excellence and the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (RSCAS) at the European University Institute (EUI), Robert Schuman Centre, Florence, 14-16 June 2007.

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# 1 Introduction

## Issues and debates on family-related migration and the migrant family: A European perspective

*Eleonore Kofman, Albert Kräler, Martin Kohli  
and Camille Schmoll*

### 1.1 Introduction

In recent years there has been growing interest in research and policy about family migrations and migrant families, resulting in an increasing number of projects,<sup>1</sup> publications and specialised conferences.<sup>2</sup> In all European states the migration of family members, which includes those accompanying workers as well as those joining citizens and settled migrants, is significant in migratory flows. In Southern Europe, there has been a dramatic increase in family flows due to larger numbers of economic migrants, regularisation programmes and introduction of legislation for family reunification. However, family migration has generally not led to debates on this topic. In Northern European states, public debate has focused on the supposedly problematic and traditional migrant family, whether it be the subordinate spouse who does not participate in the labour market, unruly and easily radicalised boys or girls being forced to conform to backward practices, such as forced and arranged marriages (Grillo this volume; Hester, Chantler, Devgon, Sharma & Singleton 2008; *Migrations Sociétés* 2008; Preller 2008; Rude-Antoine 2005; Sauer & Strasser 2008). In some instances female migrants are considered as being a more easily 'assimilated' group compared to the stigmatisation of male migrants, particularly the second generation who are frequently viewed as deviants.

*The family in question* (Grillo 2008) probes into the family as a contested and politicised terrain, as well as a moral order and marker of difference in multicultural societies, exploring the multiple representations of family life and practices. Whilst family migrations are complex, immigration regulations have sought to contain their geographical reach and structures; they define the composition of the family and restrict its flexibility, frequently reinforce gender inequalities and truncate the cohabitation of generations. States have institutionalised families and through juridical and political instruments constructed the modern family (Bourdieu 1996). A certain concept of family and family life has been an essential part of the conception of what constitutes a good citizen and the

moral order (Schmidt 2007). This does not mean that only those forms favoured by the state exist, or that groups are unable to broaden the range of familial forms supported by the state, for example, the recognition of civil partnerships and marriage between same-sex partners.

However, by stigmatising migrant families through representing their forms and relationships as a threat to Western modernity and a burden on the welfare system, the state is able to define and mould a permissible migrant family in extremely narrow terms. Thus the entry regulations laid down by the state construct family membership, its roles and functions (Strasser, Kraller, Bonjour & Bilger 2009; Toner 2007). In defining rights and obligations amongst family members, immigration and associated social policies contribute to the construction and reconstruction of the boundaries between the public and the private and between productive and reproductive spheres. These conditions both constrain what the migrant family can do and the opportunities it has to reshape and reconstitute itself and maintain links with its broader kin across national boundaries.

As many of the chapters in this volume demonstrate, the effect of restrictions and opportunities upon family members varies and is stratified by nationality, class, educational levels and age, to list some of the significant social divisions. So, too, does the family's ability to reproduce itself transnationally differ considerably according to the social capital and resources possessed by migrants.

For several decades in the post-war period and until the 1990s, family migrations were depicted as consisting primarily of family reunification with the pioneering male being followed by the dependent female who only marginally, if at all, participated in the labour market. Bohning's typology (1984), based on a simplistic periodisation of a labour recruitment phase followed by family reunification phase, demonstrates this view. However, there were relatively few studies of the diverse relationships between labour migration, family structures and gender relations (Ryan & Webster 2008; for early examples of studies of the impact of labour migration on gender and family relations see Mirdal 1984, Münscher 1984 and Neyer 1986; Abadan-Unat synthesis of her own early research in Abadan-Unat 2005). Yet family migration was already significant during the labour migration period in France, Germany and the United Kingdom, and became even more so in other countries as well once mass labour migration was stopped in the early 1970s (González-Ferrer 2007; Kofman, Phizacklea, Raghuram & Sales 2000). Thus, at the end of labour recruitment in Germany in 1973, women accounted for more than 30 per cent of migrant stocks from the main countries of recruitment (Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Portugal, Yugoslavia), clearly contradicting the perception of guest worker migration as involving predominantly single men. Their presence was seen as enabling men to settle down in stable communities. Pictorial representations of migrant life, as seen in Berger and Mohr's



(1975) aptly titled book, *Seventh man*, reaffirmed the role of women in home life. This was of course the image of migrant communities before studies of female migration began to highlight their presence in the labour market (Morokvasic 1984), showing that 'birds of passage' were also female.

While the debate on family migration was largely absent during the periods of post-colonial and classic guest worker migration, a number of related issues were raised. The first was that of binational marriages,<sup>3</sup> exemplified by the debates in the Netherlands in the 1950s on the admission and non-admission of non-Dutch women married (or formerly married) to Dutch men from Indonesia (see Van Walsum this volume). Similarly there was public campaigning for divorced wives and widows of Dutch men in Indonesia (Schrover 2009). Such discussions were particularly pertinent until the 1980s, when a woman would lose her citizenship or become stateless upon marrying a foreigner (De Hart 2006; Studer 2001; Reinecke 2008). Furthermore, being dependants themselves, women could not bring in men as their 'imported dependants' (Bhabha & Shutter 1994). Nor could women pass on their citizenship to children (De Hart & Van Oers 2006).

Children, too, were also significant in these flows. In the UK in the 1960s, for example, they formed 60 per cent of dependants (Kofman et al. 2000: 53) within family flows, which outnumbered labour entries. At the same time, concerns were expressed about the children left behind; their proportion in a migrant population varied considerably according to nationality (Charbit & Bertrand 1985). And the more that women have migrated alone, so, too, has the number of children left in the care of others in the country grown and become a major academic and policy concern (Parreñas 2005; Pratt 2008; Verseck 2008).<sup>4</sup> After the cessation of labour recruitment, many labour migrants who had not yet reunified with their families increasingly did so. However, numbers of separated or partly separated families remained high in some countries, reflecting legal obstacles to reunification, lack of resources as well as educational strategies in the case of children left behind (Kraler 2010b but, for contrasting examples, see González-Ferrer 2007 on Germany). The cessation of recruitment, however, not only led to increased levels of family reunification, but the number of children born in the country of immigration also increased. Thus, the percentage of births of children born to two foreign parents in the total number of births in West Germany increased from 3.6 per cent in 1965 to 7.8 per cent in 1970, and rose to 20 per cent of all births in 1975 (Wilpert in Bilger 2010).

As migrant families began to settle, they were often represented as being caught between two cultures (Fernandez de la Hoz 2002; Watson 1977). Too often the migrant family was reduced to its problematic aspects, focusing on the conflict between husband and wife and between genera-

tions. French research, for example, drew attention to polygamy amongst African women, parental violence, forced marriages amongst North African and Turkish girls and the authoritarianism of husbands (Vatz Laroussi 2001). However, more recent research has called into question the generalised image of dependant family members and, in particular, female family members as potential victims in processes of family reunification. These studies show that similar outcomes of family-related migration are experienced differently by different categories of migrants (Strasser et al. 2009). Thus, the 'shrinking' of the family as a result of migration and the consequent absence of wider kin networks in the country of immigration is experienced as liberating by some migrants; others may experience the absence of wider kin networks as disturbing and restricting, contributing to isolation and, in some cases, to increased material and emotional dependency on the sponsor (Strasser et al. 2009). Importantly, recent studies have also shown how the concrete outcomes of family migration are shaped by the legal and policy framework in place in the countries of immigration. Thus, the legal dependency of reunifying family members frequently plays an important role in exacerbating familial conflict, authoritarianism of the husband and domestic violence (Abraham 2008), and not only when women are in a dependent position (see George 2005 and Strasser et al. 2009 for a discussion of family dynamics in the case of female sponsors).

For a long time the family constituted the forgotten dimension of migration in policy terms and in migration theory predicated upon methodological individualism (Kofman 2004), in which the unit of analysis and action is the individual. This was reinforced by the assumption in economic theory that migration primarily involved transactions between the individual and the state (Zlotnik 1995). As authors in this volume highlight, the family and its everyday and transnational practices serve as a crucial dimension in migratory circulation and integration (Bailey & Boyle 2004; Herman 2006; King, Thomson, Fielding & Warnes 2004). In particular, the circulation of skilled migrants within a global economy is often considered as being entirely determined by economic reasons beyond the family (Ackers & Stalford 2007; Guth 2007). Yet the return from the United States of Indian information technology (IT) specialists, seen as the quintessential knowledge workers, undermines this simplistic view of contemporary migration (Varrel this volume). Equally in skilled families, the road to integration is influenced by family dynamics and strategies (Raghuram 2004). Here the family, usually conceived as belonging to the reproductive sphere and irrelevant for the economic activities of family members, may play a valuable part in the transfer of social and cultural capital and socio-economic integration (Creese, Dyck & Tiger McLaren this volume).

The problem has been that the family as a collective unit, which is

commonly located in the social and reproductive spheres, does not fit into an analysis of migration as driven purely by economic forces (Kofman 2004). Under such a perspective, the economic is equated with production while market processes and values are supposedly absent from the family as a social entity (but see Catarino & Oso this volume). Furthermore, women, being the dominant group in family migration, were assumed to be uninterested in participating in the labour market or, at best, being involved in supplementing the male breadwinner's income. Such views consigned family migrations to a secondary position not really worthy of investigation and analytical understanding (see González-Ferrer this volume).

By the 1980s, feminism began to foreground the role of women migrants and gender relations (special issue of *International Migration Review* 1984). It not only emphasised the importance of women as independent economic migrants, but also highlighted gender inequalities in immigration citizenship regulations. Thus in the mid-1980s, public policies and legal changes had begun to abolish some of the major gender inequalities, such as the right to bring in spouses and dependants and the right to transmit citizenship to one's children (Van Walsum this volume; Bhabha & Shutter 1994). Yet, rather than equalising at a higher level, these changes resulted in a levelling down of the right to bring in family members.

Feminist insights also began to reconceptualise migration theory. Monica Boyd's (1989) groundbreaking study highlighted the role of familial and personal networks in connecting sending and receiving societies, a theme that would subsequently be taken up in transnational approaches (Basch, Glick Schiller & Szanton Blanc 1994; Faist 2000; Salih 2003). Families, she argued, were socialising agents that supported geographically dispersed groups and provided assistance and information. Subsequently, further studies in the dynamics of networks over space and time developed into an interest in transnational families, their everyday practices and social networks (see Banfi & Boccagni and Evergeti & Ryan this volume; Bryceson & Vuorela 2002). Family mobility also represented an interface between the individual and the social world and between private and public spaces (Lopes, Pereulou & Balsa 1994).

## 1.2 Increasing interest in family migrations

A variety of reasons account for the accrued interest in family migrations since the 1990s, and particularly in the past decade. These include the diversification of family migration in recent years, national and European policy developments and the closely related public debates on migrant families and family-related migration, legal studies resulting from European Union involvement in this field, binational and transnational mar-

riages, and transnational families. In this section we shall briefly examine these developments.

### 1.2.1 *Diversification*

The nature of family migration has shifted from the earlier family reunification type to family formation in older immigration states. Restrictions on labour migration have left marriage as almost the sole means of entry to, and continuing residence in, the EU for third-country nationals, especially those who do not have the recognised skills (see Fleischer and Suksomboon this volume). In older immigration states this may involve second and subsequent generations marrying partners from their parents' homeland or diaspora. Among Turks in Belgium, for example, some 60 per cent of second-generation migrants marry a spouse from their homeland (Timmerman 2008), while in Denmark more than 80 per cent of Turkish and Pakistani second-generation migrants now do so, compared to just 50 per cent in the case of Turks and 74 per cent in the case of Pakistani in 1984 (Çelikaksoy 2008).

At the same time, binational marriages involving persons with a native background and migrants entering for marriage have also been constantly on the rise. Thus, in 2004, 16 per cent of all marriages conducted in Germany were binational (Bilger 2010). Similarly, the share of binational marriages in the total number of marriages conducted in Austria increased more than fivefold between the 1980s (5 to 10 per cent) and the 2000s (just below 28 per cent in 2004). However, largely impacted by legal restrictions on binational marriages and the abolition of the possibility of in-country applications for residence permits for foreign spouses, the share of binational marriages dropped significantly thereafter (Statistik Austria 2008). The greater circulation of students and tourists from OECD countries and the Third World, as well as the incorporation of a growing number of countries of origin, into global marriage markets through long-distance tourism and internet dating have been important factors contributing to an increase in the number of binational marriages, although other factors such as the increasingly globalised career trajectories among the highly skilled are also important.

In Southern European states, family-related migration has grown enormously in the past few years. The older form of family reunification is still the most common mode of family migration to Southern Europe, where it has increased very rapidly in the past few years (see González-Ferrer this volume; Bonizzoni & Cibeà 2009; Fonseca & Ormond 2008). In Spain, the repeated regularisation of irregular migrants has contributed to the growth of formal family reunification. In addition, however, there is significant *de facto* family reunification that largely takes place on the 'fringes of the legal system' and thus remains largely outside the scope of

official statistics. Through a quantitative analysis of administrative statistics and data drawn from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), Gonzalez-Ferrer concludes that the reunification process has often been completed within a very few years after the arrival of the initial migrant, suggesting that the project at the outset was part of the family strategy of relocation (see also Gil Araujo 2009, 2010).

Another category that has also expanded in several EU states following the rapid growth of skilled labour migration since the beginning of this decade has been that of accompanying family members, as can be clearly seen in the UK and to a lesser extent in Denmark. In the UK dependants formed a third of the total number of entries amongst work permit holders and their dependants in 2006, though had decreased in 2007 to just over a quarter (Home Office 2008). By contrast, accompanying family members are relatively insignificant among migrants on the lower end of the skill spectrum, indicating that processes of family reunification are socially highly selective (Kraler 2010a). Indeed, in a number of countries low-skilled migrants are increasingly admitted through temporary migration schemes rather than through permanent migration, and are often unentitled to family reunification altogether. The freedom of movement now enjoyed by Eastern Europeans frequently means that they engage in transient circulations, unlike non-EU nations such as migrant women from the former Soviet Union or Latin America (see Banfi & Boccagni and Bonizzoni this volume).

The table below highlights the wide variations in the composition of flows and the significance of family flows. The UK had the most balanced inflow with all categories being represented. It should also be noted that the category Other often includes family members. So, too, does the free movement category, which includes family members of Eastern Europeans who have had the right to work in Ireland, Sweden and the UK since 2004; this and was extended to other countries in Southern Europe from 2006. Even if they may have moved initially without dependants, many migrants have been subsequently joined by their families (Ackers & Stalford 2007; Ryan & Webster 2008). We know, however, very little about gender differences in family migration flows although this is beginning to be examined through quantitative analysis of official statistics (see González-Ferrer this volume, 2006, 2007), large-scale surveys (Algava & Bèque 2008) and small-scale qualitative studies (see the Civic Stratification, Gender and Family Migration Policies in Europe project). Interviews with those signing the integration contract (*Contrat d'accueil et d'intégration*) in France revealed that 55 per cent of women were joining a spouse compared to 30 per cent of men, and 22 per cent had entered alone compared to 43 per cent of men (Algava & Bèque 2008). The ability to speak French fluently was much higher for men (30 per cent) than women (22 per cent), amongst whom many (41 per cent) could speak

only little or no French. In terms of previous educational level, there were insignificant differences between women and men who had higher education degrees (20 per cent and 22 per cent, respectively) or the baccalauréat (15 per cent and 16 per cent). The biggest disparity emerged between those who could neither read nor write (8 per cent women and 3 per cent men). The survey also shed light on another topic about which we know little, that of entry into the labour market and employment. Seventy-four per cent of men had previously worked in their country of origin compared to 50 per cent of women for whom migration frequently represented a move into unemployment. In Spain (see González-Ferrer this volume), participation in the labour market varies according to whether one was a first mover reuniting with a family member or a reuniting spouse.

**Table 1.1** *Composition of permanent type\* of migratory inflows 2007 (in %)*

Country	Work	Accompanying family of workers	Family (reunification and formation)	Humanitarian	Other	Free movement
Austria	1	1	40	11	0	46
Belgium	6	0	35	7	0	50
Denmark	15	6	18	5	5	50
France	6	0	59	4	10	20
Finland	9	-	36	12	4	39
Germany	6	0	23	3	4	64
Italy	31	2	40	3	2	22
Netherlands	5	0	47	24	0	24
Norway	8	0	50	12	0	30
Portugal	29	0	62	0	0	9
Sweden	0	0	37	38	0	35
Switzerland	2	0	21	5	2	70
UK	29	14	18	9	6	24

\* 'Permanent type migration' is a concept used by the OECD, referring to all legal inflows that may lead to permanent legal residence in a country.

Source: SOPEMI (2008)

First movers have higher labour activity rates than spouses (for both females and males) who enter as dependants. Whilst females dominate family flows, men also constitute a significant proportion, especially amongst migrations pioneered by women or those joining settled and second-generation migrant populations (see Ahmad 2008 and Charlsley

2005 for the UK). Men may encounter similar problems of dependency and isolation as migrant women who are cut off from their families in the country of origin. They may also face deskilling in the labour market (George 2005; Kofman, Rogoz & Lévy 2010; Strasser et al. 2009).

Another recent study on marriage patterns among immigrants in Germany (González-Ferrer 2006) found marked gender differences in relation to the practice of 'importing' spouses. While importing spouses is associated with low educational levels among male primary migrants, the same is not true with respect to women. Research on Denmark suggests that such differences can also be observed along ethnic lines. Thus, while Pakistani marriage migrants are more highly educated than their spouses in Denmark, the reverse is true for Turkish marriage migrants in whose case importing spouses seems to be a way to maintain 'traditional' norms (Çelikaksoy, Sykt Nielsen & Verner 2006).

### 1.2.2 *Rationales and development of family migration policies*<sup>6</sup>

During the recruitment period, many states explicitly attempted to limit family reunification to ensure the eventual return of migrants (Bilger 2010 on Germany; Kraler 2010a). After the end of recruitment, family reunification was often not an explicit policy but the unintended consequence of various restrictions, as well as being informal and despite official preference for return. At the same time, formal rules on family reunification were underdeveloped in most European countries and, where rules existed, family reunification was nevertheless frequently spontaneous and outside formal channels. The UK was among the few European states that did have an elaborate policy framework regulating family-related migration early on. Various measures were imposed in the 1960s and 1970s aimed specifically at restricting marriage migration to the UK, most notably through the notorious 'primary purpose' rule. Here, the main objective was to curb overall levels of migration, to which family-related migration, especially marriage migration, was seen to be contributing.

In contrast, policy developments in Continental Europe were until the 1990s rarely informed by explicit macro-level objectives. Rather, developments were driven by action on the ground – the elaboration of rules by migration authorities, and since the 1980s, by the courts that increasingly had to deal with cases involving family members. By the 1990s, the European Convention of Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg were more often invoked in family-related cases and proved important in elaborating rights to family reunification in national contexts and establishing a common baseline for family reunification across Europe, on which legislative developments at the European Union level could be built (Guiraudon & Lahav 2000; Lahav 1997; Thym 2008).

The content of the first far-reaching legislative proposals at the European level, however, derived its impetus very much from the 'liberal moment' around the Tampere Summit in 1999 and the institutional opportunity structure at the time that allowed European pro-immigrant NGOs and associations to influence the drafting of the first directive (Geddes 2000). Due to resistance by some member states, the final directive, however, was quite different from the original version.

Yet, the Europeanisation of family migration policies not only established common (albeit weak) standards, but also initiated horizontal processes of policy diffusion, with governments adopting policies elaborated elsewhere in their own countries, most evident in the case of integration contracts and pre-entry tests. In Eastern European countries without a prior history of migration policymaking, policies were generally developed based on Western European models and the EU *acquis*, with little or no public debate and often without there being concrete objectives behind policy proposals – except from bringing countries' legislation in line with what were regarded as 'European standards' (see Szczepanikova 2008 on the Czech Republic). In Western European countries, policymakers have similarly come to draw on models developed elsewhere, although usually in the framework of home-grown debates on family-related migration. Several key concerns have driven policy developments in individual countries or have been invoked as justification for policy changes. These include numbers and related attempts to restrict family-related migration, the abuse of family reunification provisions (marriages of convenience), debates on forced and arranged marriages and more far-reaching concerns about the negative implications of co-ethnic marriage migration from traditional sending countries.

More and more, marriages are being viewed as sham marriages entered into so as to bypass immigration regulations (Kabis 2001; *European Journal of Migration and Law* 2006). This is seen especially when cultural difference between spouses are considered too great or the age difference 'unusual', generally when a woman is significantly older than her husband (Kofman, Lukes, Meetoo & Aaron 2008; Strasser et al. 2009). In response to these suspicious attitudes, the length of probationary periods for spouses has been extended and greater scrutiny by administrative authorities imposed in a number of countries. The age of marriage for spouses and partners has also been increased, supposedly to protect girls from forced marriages as well as the desire to slow down the continual inflow into communities of new migrants deemed to be living apart or in parallel lives. In Germany, for example, concern with low levels of intermarriage of Turkish migrants led to increasing age of marriage to eighteen (Deutsche Welle 2008). Policymakers are often adamant that one of the main objectives of setting a higher age is to restrict marriage migration and reduce overall levels of migration. Thus, the Dutch Minister of Alien



Affairs and Integration expected that the increased marriage age in conjunction with raised income levels would lead to a reduction of family formation by no less than 45 per cent (Bonjour 2008: 25). A study commissioned by the UK Home Office on the likely effects of raising marriage age found that such a move would involve more risks than benefits and concluded that immigration policy is not an appropriate tool to address forced marriages (Hester, Chantler, Gangoli, Devgon, Sharma & Singleton 2008). Despite this recommendation, the UK Border Agency raised the age of marriage to 21 for both spouses in November 2008. Although the use of immigration policy as a tool to fight forced marriage remains questionable, upping marriage age has also been supported by some feminist NGOs. Integration criteria, such as knowledge of the country's language, have also been, or are about to be, attached to admission criteria in Austria, Germany, France, the Netherlands and the UK (see Van Walsum this volume; Bilger 2010; Bonjour 2008; Kofman, Rogoz & Lévy 2009), and are debated in other countries.

The widening gap between changing norms of family life and the much narrower and simplistic conception of the family as formulated in migration law has often been noted (see Kofman & Kraler 2006; Van Walsum this volume). But less clear is why this is so. To be true, law often lags behind developments in society, but in other areas, such as family law, the law has adapted to changing realities of family life much faster. One explanation may be that family norms in contemporary European societies have actually changed much less than the diversification of family patterns seems to suggest. Indeed, despite this diversification, reflected in the increase of patchwork families and a multitude of partnership arrangements (with or without children), many Europeans still seem to cling to traditional notions of the family. As Riaño (this volume) in her case study of binational marriages in Switzerland suggests, the unequal positioning of men and women in relations of dependency by family reunification provisions in Swiss aliens legislation may reflect, rather than contradict, Swiss 'gender culture'.

### 1.2.3 *Legal aspects and European involvement*

As we saw in the previous section, there has been an increasing European involvement in the conditions for family reunification. A growing body of legal literature on family migration policy has been produced following the EU Family Reunification Directive 86/2003/EC and the right to family reunification under free movement legislation (European Migration Network 2008; Groenendijk, Fernhout, Van Dam, Van Oers & Strik 2007; Peers, Barzilay, Groenendijk & Guild 2000; Van Walsum & Spijkerboer 2007; Walter 2009). Rights to family reunification under free movement legislation (consolidated in 2004 in Directive 2004/38/EC)

originally served as the yardstick in elaboration of the family reunification directive, defined a relatively high standard of rights and, in so doing, followed an unusually wide definition of the family. Despite this, and although the intention of EU-wide legislation expressed in the Tampere Declaration in 1999 saw family reunification as facilitating integration and economic and social cohesion, by the time of the directive in 2003 migrant families were seen as hindering integration and burdening the welfare state. A number of the initial proposals were watered down and laid down as minimum conditions in the directive.

Nevertheless, the past years have witnessed some progressive measures, especially concerning relationships akin to marriage such as cohabitation and same-sex partnerships. Member states may treat 'long-term stable relationships' or 'registered partnerships' (under national regulations) as equivalent to marriage. This is already occurring in a number of states. Access to the labour market after twelve months for secondary migrants and an entitlement to an autonomous title independent of the sponsor after no more than five years of residence were also included in such provisions. In most countries this condition is met before the maximum period stipulated in the directive.

By October 2008, two opposing conceptions of family reunification had emerged. On the one hand, there was that of the commission whose proposal would improve the Family Reunification Directive, for example, by applying the same age limits for spouses and partners of third-country nationals as for citizens, and only imposing compulsory integration and language measures to facilitate, rather than discourage, reunification (European Commission 2008a; Huddleston 2008). Generally, the impetus of the proposal was to bring the rights under the directive closer to the rights of family members of EU citizens, regulated in a separate directive.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum agreed under the French presidency would lower standards in many states to those operating in France and, in particular, introduce the new criteria of a state's capacity to receive family migrants (Council of the European Union 2008). Meanwhile, the original model for the Family Reunification Directive – rights of family members under freedom of movement legislation – has not been fully put into practice.

Thus, in a second report published in late 2008, the European Commission found the implementation of the right to family reunification under free movement legislation seriously lacking and 'disappointing' (European Commission 2008b). In principle, both in terms of the scope and the strength of the rights the 2004 directive accords to family members,<sup>8</sup> it goes considerably beyond the scope of the Family Reunification Directive. This has had the perverse effect that EU member state nationals who do not enjoy freedom of movement rights have lesser rights than other EU citizens in a number of EU member states, a practice that has

been dubbed 'reverse discrimination'. Thus, in Austria, conditions for reunification are more restrictive for family members of Austrian nationals compared to those of other EU nationals regarding the sponsor's financial means and family members' obligation to fulfil integration requirements. Similarly, since 2007, third-country national spouses of German nationals are now admitted under the same (restrictive) conditions as spouses of third-country nationals. Among other requirements, they also must therefore prove a minimum level of German language proficiency before entry, whereas family members of other EU nationals in Germany are exempted from this requirement (European Migration Network 2008: 19). As a result of the unequal treatment of family members of nationals vis-à-vis family members of other EU nationals, an increasing number of binational families have opted for temporary relocations to other EU member states to 'gain' mobility rights and thus faster access to family reunification and other rights associated with freedom of movement.

At the time of the directive, Jastram (2003) made the following comment:

Globalization has expanded the realm in which families live and work, and created a new geography of family life. Few migrants, even those who have made the choice to travel and to do so alone, intend a permanent, or even long-term, separation from their loved ones. Immigration policymakers will increasingly be called upon to recognize the rights and realities of families living across borders.

Yet, instead we have seen a growing tension between globalising economic and social processes and the political restrictions imposed by states on family migrants. Furthermore, as states have tightened the conditions of family migration for their own citizens, more EU citizens, as we have noted above, have availed themselves of the preferential treatment afforded to EU nationals using their EU mobility rights in order to live with a non-EU member as a family unit (for Dutch examples, see Hollomey 2008). For EU citizens the definition of family members is more extensive; unlike non-EU nationals, they do not have to comply with criteria of minimum age and language competence.

Contrary to the general harmonising impetus of EU legislation, one of the most striking results of policymaking on family-related migration at the European level is an increasing fragmentation and differentiation of the right to family reunification, thus creating and reinforcing civic stratification – the differential positioning of individuals within a hierarchical system of rights (Morris 2002; Kofman & Kraler 2006). In part, this is a consequence of the differentiation of rights according to the nationality and legal status of the sponsor (i.e. whether the sponsor is a na-

tional, a national of another EU member state, a national who enjoys freedom of movement rights, a third-country national, a refugee or a third-country national who is a long-term resident).<sup>9</sup> It is also the result of relatively weak standards with respect to these individual categories within current legal instruments under EU legislation. Thus, as far as third-country nationals are concerned, a major reason for the poor record of the directive in bringing about comparable minimum standards with respect to the right to family reunification can be found in the 27 derogation clauses of the directive (Huddleston 2008). Rather than a harmonisation of the definition of the right to family reunification in the spirit of the directive, we see a common movement to the bottom based on a harmonisation around the various derogation clauses, for instance, with respect to the minimum age for spouses and integration conditions. Family migration policy – like migration policy, in general – thus oscillates between a logic of inclusion and a logic of exclusion: the expansion of the right to family reunification has been accompanied by increasing barriers to legal statuses that are associated with these rights, and increasing policing of the boundaries between migrants as well as family members eligible for family reunification and those who are not (see also Wimmer 2002: 267–269).

For some family members, such as unaccompanied minors,<sup>10</sup> the very meaning of family reunification is replete with contradictions (see Empez Vidal this volume). In order to be covered by child protection laws, the unaccompanied minor (usually male) must show that he or she has been neglected by the family. Returning a child to the family, as happens in the case of Moroccan boys in Spain, is pursued by officials on the grounds that children are better off living with their families. For the families of these youngsters, however, return usually represents failure – the inability of the child to live and work in a wealthier country. Paradoxically, family reunification as an instrument of child protection policy and purportedly a tool in ‘the best interest of the child’ may actually exacerbate situations of ‘neglect’ in a transnational context.

#### 1.2.4 *Mixed and binational marriages*

Transnationalism and globalisation are themes in the broad range of studies investigating various aspects of binational marriages, involving citizens and non-citizens from different cultural or ethnic backgrounds (Allievi & Tognetti-Bordogna 1996; Beck-Gernsheim 2004, 2007; Beer 1996; Kabis 2001; Passerini 2004; Philippe, Varro & Neyrand 1998; Reunkaw 2003; Riaño and Suksomboon this volume; Schlehe 2001). While the terms ‘mixed’ or ‘bicultural’ are also used with respect to this particular form of cross-border marriage, the term ‘binational marriages’, in our view, best captures the interlinkage of issues related to the different

cultural backgrounds of the spouses with issues related to citizenship and residence. The latter also explains much of the political salience of this form of couple relationship.

Although the majority of migrants in such relationships are female, reflecting dominant norms of partner choice and 'global marriage-scapes' (Lauser 2008), an increasing number of males are involved.<sup>11</sup> As Annett Fleischer's case study of male Cameroonian migrants in this volume shows, males may be dominant in specific migration streams. At the same time, Fleischer's chapter also shows that the conceptualisation of these Cameroonian men as marriage migrants may be misplaced. Unlike the Thai women studied by Suksumboon, marriage is in most cases not part of the original migratory projects of these men. Although they, too, hold sexualised fantasies about 'the West' very similar to those of Thai female marriage migrants, marriage for them seems to be largely a strategy that emerges in the receiving context, reflecting different opportunity structures and processes at work for men and women.

Binational marriages raise a number of issues such as the definition of the family unit, the organisation of gender relations, the communication of family members across borders and the creation of spaces of intercultural social contact and social institutions (Lauth Bacas 2002). These marriages may be based on very unequal relationships founded on gender inequality and reinforced by immigration and social policy, as Riaño (this volume) shows for Switzerland, and of an exoticisation of the Other (Suksumboon this volume). In some cases, inequality in status and power between spouses may amount to outright coercion and involve both physical and psychological violence. There is consequently a large body of literature, partly from an advocacy background, which discusses binational marriages under a trafficking perspective and portrays women in these relationships as 'mail-order brides' and victims of global marriage and sex markets. However, as Palriwala and Uberoi (2008) remind us, one should be careful not to reduce female marriage migrants to mere victims and to disregard women's agency. And as Nicole Constable (2003) has argued in her study of 'mail-order brides', women are neither mere victims nor solely in search of better living in a wealthier country. Indeed, in the view of the women and men she interviewed, the discourse of 'mail-order brides' not only fails to capture the reality of these relationships, but is experienced as deeply offensive (see also Suksumboon this volume).

Mixed marriages are not only subject to suspicion from both majority and minority communities,<sup>12</sup> but they are also seen as 'suspect' by the state – the ultimate legitimator of marriage as a legal institution (European Journal of Migration and Law 2006; Kabis 2001). Not only does the state meticulously control access to any residence rights that may be gained through marriage by probing whether a relationship is genuine, based on certain conceptions of how relationships should be conducted, but various

countries also increasingly attempt to control and restrict access to marriage itself (see section 1.2.2 on rationales and development of policies).

Mixed marriages between a dominant and a racialised group may engender strong opposition (Mounier 2000). The dominant group may be unhappy about marriage with the subordinate one (Deutsche Welle 2008), whilst the minority may seek to maintain its identity and limit border crossings. Women, in particular, are often seen to represent the continuity of the culture and its traditions, especially in the context of changes wrought by migration (Yuval-Davis & Anthias 1989). There are also gender differences in attitudes and regulations about marrying outside the community. For example, amongst Muslims it is permissible for men to marry non-Muslim women, but not the other way round.

### 1.2.5 *Transnational marriages*

Long-distance transnational marriages between co-ethnic spouses are by no means a new phenomenon (Hoerder 2002). Indeed, transnational marriages have been a major theme in the reproduction of classic trade diasporas such as Indian communities, as well as in the maintenance of transnational ties between Indian communities in East Africa, the UK and India (Bastos 2005). However, these, too, have become more important as a result of greater global mobility and changing patterns of migration. As a result of the transition of migration of Western European countries from labour recruitment to settlement migration and the emergence of second and third generations, transnational marriage migration has overtaken classic family reunification. Although mixed marriages have increased too (see section 1.2.4), co-ethnic marriages remain the dominant mode of marriages among migrant communities and of transnational marriages. Transnational marriages are at the centre of current debates on family-related migration. Not only do they contribute to the reproduction of ethnic communities, involving significant chain migration, but they also raise several issues regarding integration and multiculturalism.

Associated, as they are, with 'traditional practices' such as forced and arranged marriages, transnational marriages have become a contested issue and subject to increased state regulation. In addition, the persistence of co-ethnic marriage preferences among the second generation raises issues regarding intermarriage and integration. In particular, it calls into question the often tacit expectation that second and third generations would show a greater tendency to assimilate and intermarry. Yet the incidence of co-ethnic marriages or, conversely, the incidence of mixed marriage varies enormously between different groups and, within these groups, by gender and generation. Thus, a recent survey of intermarriage patterns among major migrant communities in selected Western European countries (Lucassen & Laarman 2009) found that women marry

partners from outside their group less often than their male counterparts. While a higher proportion of second-generation members tends to intermarry more than the first generation, there are large differences. In the case of guest workers from Southern Europe and the West Indies, intermarriage rates of the second generation are double that of the first generation, with women lower than men. Intermarriage rates range between 15 per cent (Southern European female migrants) and 26 per cent (West Indians) among the first generation and 38 per cent (Southern European female migrants) and 60 per cent (West Indian males) among the second generation, respectively. By contrast, intermarriage rates among Moroccans and Turks are far lower (5 and 11 per cent for first-generation females and males, respectively, and 8 and 16 per cent for second-generation females and males) (Lucassen & Laarman 2009: Table 3). Religion, family systems, discrimination, colonial and other ties are important factors explaining such patterns. In contrast to the US experience, 'race' seems to be a much less significant factor in Europe.

As in the case of binational marriages, global processes are reflected in transnational marriage practices by linking individuals' aspirations for marriage and mobility. These opportunities for marriage and mobility are highly gendered and are, in the context of international migration, mediated by different forms of state regulation (Palriwala & Uberoi 2008a). In the face of massive global asymmetries of opportunities and resources, transnational marriage presents opportunities to bridge these asymmetries at the level of individuals and families. In the context of migration, supposedly traditional practices such as arranged marriages and bride price and dowry payments may gain in importance rather than be discontinued (Palriwala & Uberoi 2008a: 48; Timmerman 2008). While marriage migration thus presents concrete opportunities for social mobility and access to resources for individuals and their families in the sending contexts, 'importing' a spouse also presents opportunities for migrants and their families in the receiving contexts, although these are not free from contradictions and tensions. Thus, parents who marry off their children to spouses from the country of origin regard co-ethnics in the receiving context as too westernised and morally suspicious, a perception frequently shared by their children, even if they do not necessarily cite the same reasons for preferring partners from abroad (Straßburger 2003, 2004; Timmerman 2008).

Marrying co-ethnic partners may also be a conscious attempt to reproduce ethnic social capital and reinforce ethnic networks in a context of highly stratified and segregated social networks in the receiving context (Straßburger 2003). Another important factor in transnational marriages is power asymmetries between 'natives' and those marrying in, as well as the resulting relations of dependency between spouses, asymmetries that are mediated and partly reinforced by state regulations on immigration.

Although such asymmetries are not specific to transnational marriages and are a similarly defining trait of binational relationships, they may carry different meanings, for example, if a woman raised in an immigration context uses marriage to a spouse from the country of origin to increase her scope of agency and reduce the influence of in-laws (Straßburger 2004). Transnational marriages may also involve relocation of a spouse raised in the receiving context to the country of origin. Although transnational marriages have received increasing attention over the past few years, little systematic analysis has been done on reverse marriage migration to the country of origin outside the context of advocacy and social work.

#### 1.2.6 *Transnational families*

Transnational families have also received increasing attention recently (Bryceson & Vuorela 2002). The literature often addresses two types of relationships within the family. The first concerns children left behind, their care and transnational motherhood (Hodagneu-Sotelo & Avila 1997; Parreñas 2005; Verneck 2008).<sup>13</sup> The debate has emphasised the problems children face with one or both parents being absent, their relationships with other kin or carers and whether resources generated from migration may make up for the absence of direct parental support. According to Parreñas (2005), fathers rarely pick up caring responsibilities; much more common is the phenomenon of 'other-mothering', where grandmothers, older daughters or other female kin take over the care. On the other hand, based on a detailed study in the Philippines, Asis (2006) suggests that in about half the cases where mothers have migrated, children identified men as the primary caregivers, a finding at odds with that of Parreñas.

While much of the literature focuses on non-EU migrants, some issues may also apply to the children of skilled migrants moving within the EU (Ackers & Stalford 2007). Less common but nevertheless significant, especially in countries with family reunification, are the difficulties children encounter in adapting to the country of destination (see Bonizzoni and Catarino & Oso this volume). The age and educational level at which the children move are likely to influence the difficulties they face in adapting to a new family life.

The second topic concerns the relationship between migrant children and parents left behind, especially the material and emotional care they may need as they grow older (see Evergeti & Ryan this volume; Baldassar 2008). For Baldassar and Baldock (2007), giving and receiving care means the capacity to care, a sense of obligation that differs between cultures and the negotiations to provide care between members of the family. The interplay between family dynamics and networks is set within a broader context of public policy and welfare regimes. The different modalities in which care is fulfilled will depend on the expectations of family members



and the availability of care resources in different settings, such as the household, the commercial sector, the community and voluntary sectors and the state (Kofman 2009).

Whilst there is a substantial literature on domestic labour (Lutz 2008) and the global chains of care (Yeates 2004) focusing on migrant women from poorer countries who supply care at home in wealthy countries (Hochschild 2000; Parreñas 2001), less attention has been paid to the care provided transnationally by families to their older parents left behind. The migration of children, for example from Ireland or Southern European countries (see Evereti & Ryan this volume; Zontini 2007), had once often occurred, some time ago when these countries were poor. In the meantime, such countries have grown wealthy and experienced a deficit of care provision requiring their own recourse to migrant labour. In such situations, children may still provide intermittent care, emotional support and financial assistance. For intra-European migrants, in particular, frequent visits (Mason 2004) in addition to regular internet and telephone communication, help reduce the effect of distance. It is also easier for them to reconstitute the family in the country of destination than for third-country nationals for whom immigration regulations limit the entry of older parents and grandparents as well as their own mobility towards their country of origin.

In countries such as Australia and Canada (see Creese, Dyck & McLaren this volume), it is easier for certain groups to bring in grandparents who in turn perform the child-care so that both parents can work. Thus, the role of grandparents may be reframed by the migration process. In specific situations grandparents will stay in the home country and take care of the children left behind (Castagnone, Eve, Petrillo & Piperno 2007). In other cases, grandparents will engage in temporary and sometimes permanent migration in order to take care of their grandchildren (Escrivà 2005; Nedelcu 2008).

It is often assumed that migrant families are special in this respect, and that native families in the course of modernisation have lost their solidarity potential beyond the nuclear household. However, the burgeoning research literature on contemporary family and kinship relations in Western societies provides a different picture. It shows that the family is still a key system of social support among all living generations, and thus a strong pillar of the welfare mix of these societies (Kohli 1999; Arber & Attias-Donfut 2000; Albertini, Kohli & Vogel 2007). Summing up this literature yields the following schematic results (Kohli 2004).

- Adult children and their elderly parents live close to each other (although mostly not in the same household), feel close to each other emotionally, have frequent contact with each other and mutually support each other through several types of help.
- Financial transfers and social support are still frequent and substantial,

occurring mostly in the generational lineage, with their net flow being mostly downward, from parents to children.

- Financial transfers *inter vivos* are complemented by bequests. *Inter vivos* transfers go to children in need ('altruism'), while bequests are distributed equally among all children. There is no longer evidence of a gender bias favouring sons.
- Differences among countries are substantial and tend to be clustered in relation to welfare regimes.

Transnational families are different due to greater geographical distance between the generations, but this may be compensated by even larger flows of support as well as by regular pendular mobility (Krumme 2004). Remittances from migrants to their country of origin are, to a large extent, family transfers. Their intergenerational direction depends on which generation is left in the country of origin. As migrant families have been less able than their non-migrant counterparts to build up wealth, bequests among them are less frequent.

Intergenerational relationships also change amongst migrant families living nearby within the same country. In recent years, several comprehensive studies have begun to systematically compare migrant and non-migrant families along these lines (e.g. Attias-Donfut 2006 for France; Baykara-Krumme 2008 for Germany). Based on a quantitative analysis of major migrant groups compared with the non-migrant Dutch, Schans and De Valk (this volume) argue that whilst attitudes towards filial obligations differ amongst migrant groups (Moroccans, Turkish, Surinamese and Antilleans) and between themselves and the Dutch, actual support received by each group is not as differentiated. Dutch parents do indeed receive a higher degree of emotional support and advice than many other groups, and there is therefore no direct correspondence of attitudes with actual support. In Germany, elderly migrants have a somewhat higher rate of co-residence with their adult children; these and other differences can mostly be explained by structural factors, but there are also some elements of cultural tradition involved (Baykara-Krumme 2007). Both attitudes and actual care and support for the older generation depend on position within the family. For example, in some cultures, as in India (see Varrel this volume), it is the older male child who is expected to provide support. The kind of support also varies according to gender. Women are more likely to provide physical and bodily care whilst men are more inclined to supply financial advice or do handy work around the home (Baldassar & Baldock 2000). Within family businesses in France and Spain daughters seem to show greater indebtedness and create non-commercial relations (see Catarino & Oso this volume).

Today de-familialisation<sup>14</sup> (Esping-Andersen 1999) means that there is a variety of ways in which care is organised through the state and the

market. However, the often held assumption that the welfare state has crowded out family support has been refuted. The literature finds instead that the welfare state has provided the family with new resources for assisting its weaker members; in other words, it has ‘crowded in’ family support (Kohli 1999; Künemund & Rein 1999). The different mix of possibilities (family, state, market, voluntary, community) and recourse to migrant labour vary according to particular welfare regimes (Albertini et al. 2007; Kofman 2009). However, we need to achieve a fuller understanding of the effect of welfare arrangements on intergenerational support behaviour in immigrant families.

### 1.3 Migrant families and the sociology of the family

As shown in the preceding section, it is important to situate the migrant family within the broader field of the sociology of the family. Interest in the family, both theoretically and in smaller-scale qualitative studies (Smart 2005), is flourishing, with the focus of study widening again to account for the impact of families on the social, economic and political order and its change. Since the 1960s – the high point of modern ‘familism’ in terms of nuptiality and fertility based on the male-as-breadwinner model – we have witnessed a massive pluralisation of the legal and demographic forms of living together. As such, speaking of ‘the family’ in academic discourse is now routinely replaced by the plural ‘families’ – with ‘migrant families’ sometimes treated as one such form (if not several) of them. There is also a renewed interest in linking the macro-social dimensions of families to those of intimate relations. One of the most heated debates in this field is individualisation (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Giddens 1991), which argues that individuals are increasingly able to choose with whom they associate, and reflect on the nature of their social bonds. It is claimed that individuals are set free from the constraints of class and gender rigidities and of traditional family and community control, as the hold of these social bonds is weakened. External moral codes no longer regulate familial and social behaviour to the same extent as before. Individuals’ social lives have been disembedded from local contexts and are stretched ‘across indefinite spans of time and place’ (Giddens 1990: 20).

This thesis has been critiqued for its simple dichotomy between tradition and modernity. Some question the usefulness of the notion of detraditionalisation and suggest that traditional practices and reflexivity coexist (Adam 1996). We also need to reconsider what constitutes a traditional form or practice and how older forms may be reinvented and modified in response to new conditions. Families must be seen as parts of wider kinship networks (Heady & Kohli 2010). Families beyond the nuclear

household are important and useful to make up for the inadequacies in the provision of formal care (see Creese et al. this volume). Though family forms and living arrangements are becoming more diverse, there is no evidence that the traditional roles of nurture and care have been abandoned (Anttonen, Baldock & Sipilä 2003; Williams 2004). These roles are simply carried out within different and, sometimes, non-consanguineous and changing sets of relatives. What this means is that the shape of commitments is changing but there is no loss of commitments. People are still embedded in their relationships with others.

The individualisation thesis shares with other approaches the assumption that changes in labour force participation trigger family change. Hence, as women increasingly enter the labour market and become independent earners, they cease to be dependent on men. Yet many women do not enter the labour market on the same terms as men nor with the same conditions of employment. Moreover, unlike men, they still bear the main responsibility for care of close and more distant family members throughout their life course. They thus face the dilemma of reconciliation between formal work and family care – not only as young mothers but also as middle-aged adults in a potential ‘sandwich’ situation (Künemund 2006).

The claims of individualisation run up against the evidence of continuing – and possibly increasing – homogamy with regard to education and class, while other formerly powerful dimensions of ‘assortative mating’ such as ethnicity and religion seem to lose their hold. But here there may be countervailing trends among migrant families, with second- and third-generation migrants showing greater homogamy.

A number of scholars seeking to rebut the picture of individual and detached social relations within and beyond the family have found Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of social reproduction and the family to be valuable and insightful (Charles, Aull Davies & Harris 2008; McNay 1999). His definition of the family is based on ‘economic, physical and above all symbolic power relations’ and linked to the economic, social and cultural capitals possessed by its members (see Creese et al. this volume). The family has a permanence that is reproduced through everyday activities of support, exchange of gifts and visits – which are disproportionately carried out by women – and, above all, by the intergenerational transmission of capital.

However, Bourdieu’s conceptualisation, like much writing on the sociology of the family, mainly focuses on the nation-state and its citizens as the main scale of social life and unit of observation. In doing so, it ignores the effects of people’s transnational mobility, the transnationalisation of family forms and arrangements and the ways that family structures are socially reproduced across nation-states in response to immigration restrictions. It can therefore be said that the sociology of the family often

suffers from a kind of ‘methodological nationalism’ (Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2002). Classic textbooks of sociology of the family make almost no reference to migrant families. *The Blackwell companion to the sociology of families* (Scott, Treas & Richards 2003) is a notable exception: two chapters are dedicated to migrant families, though still as if they were a specific and isolated issue rather than part of a wider picture regarding family changes in contemporary societies.

Migrant families indeed challenge monolithic visions of the family and can be seen as paradigmatic of the diversification of family structures and arrangements that have occurred over the last three decades (Williams 2004). Moreover, they urge us to include diversity when taking into account new family forms and arrangements. Apart from the studies cited above, there is still a lack of empirical research that compares immigrant and non-immigrant family forms.

A number of questions can be asked about migration and individualisation. To what extent does the migration process lead to specific forms of individualisation of the migrant members of the family? How does it lead to a redefinition of family members’ commitments? To what extent does renegotiation of intergenerational relationships occur within broader patterns of social change (Cole & Durham 2007)? Migration represents individuals’ belonging and positioning within family and gender structures and relations but, at the same time, the migratory process can lead to a reformulation of gender and generational roles within both the productive and reproductive spheres.

A shortcoming of migration research is that it has mainly focused on the role of women within the family, thus neglecting the investigation of relations between family members (Charsley 2005; George 2005; Passerini 2004; Ryan & Webster 2008). For instance, the evolution of norms regarding fatherhood, motherhood and parenting during the migration process should be questioned. How does migration affect the perception of what is a good father or mother? How does it affect the balance between breadwinning and care sharing or between productive and reproductive tasks? Little research has been undertaken on fatherhood<sup>15</sup> in the context of family migration and on how migration impacts both masculinities and femininities within the family.

## 1.4 The contributions in this volume

The individual case studies in this volume respond to the need for methodological pluralism and address different aspects of family-related dimensions of international migration and processes of incorporation through a variety of methods, approaches, from different disciplinary perspectives and at different levels of analysis. These combine insider

perspectives of individuals and families involved in family migration with outsider perspectives of the state and social workers as well as broader societal discourses. The contributions also span different geographical areas. While most chapters focus on European receiving countries, also dealt with are migrants in Canada and highly skilled migrants returning to India. To the extent that they address transnational dimensions of family migration, many contributions also extend to major regions of origin, both within and outside Europe.

Chapters have been organised around four major themes: 1) the family as a moral and social order and contested norms; 2) gender, generation and work in the migrant family; 3) marriage migration and gender relations; and 4) transnational family lives and practices.

In the first section, the chapters investigate the family as a moral and social order, as a site of contestation and an arena where different conceptions of the family and its moral and social underpinnings are negotiated. They do so from different perspectives.

The first two chapters by Sarah van Walsum and Ralph Grillo, respectively, investigate moral discourses around migrant families and assumptions and observations about the migrant family as expressed in policy debates and policies on migrant families. In particular, they address the increasing problematisation of the migrant and minority ethnic family seen as the site of practices that distinguish it from the supposedly individualistic and egalitarian Western model in which marriage has lost its centrality. Van Walsum (chapter 2) places concerns over the migrant family and family migration within the broader context of changes in Dutch immigration, integration and social policies, as well as the past few decades' emergence of a new moral order of individual responsibility, labour force participation, sexual emancipation and gender equality. Van Walsum argues that the migrant family has been increasingly seen as the antithesis of liberalism and secularism, which have come to characterise Dutch identity. Because specific migrant groups are seen to threaten this social order, they had to be restricted in their entry. She also highlights how technologies of control have shifted from a colonial preoccupation with sexuality (or the creation of children as a result of that act) as well as issues of racial purity and mixity to delinquent children lowering the market values of global cities.

In the UK, as Grillo highlights (chapter 3), families are also the place where who may do what, when and how is decided. As Grillo argues, migration, as one source of change, puts a great strain on the familial moral order, forcing people on all sides to interpret or reinterpret beliefs and practices. Families have thus become an iconic cultural, social and ideological 'site' of contestation around cultural difference, cultural and social change and policies intended to address them. They serve as a powerful kaleidoscope through which to examine the realities of contem-

porary multicultural societies. Grillo shows how in debates about marriage practices, boundaries are drawn and a *modus vivendi* is reached. He argues that rather than the imposition of a hegemonic authority in a top-down manner, these debates involve a complex negotiation of different interests and stakes, reflecting the complex *rapport de force* in contemporary Britain.

Contributions by Djamila Schans and Helga de Valk (chapter 4) and Núria Empez Vidal (chapter 5) reflect on the family as a social and moral order from the micro-perspective of individuals 'on the ground'. Both chapters focus on children, investigating the interplay and contradictions between societal and individual family norms, attitudes and practices. Schans and De Valk (chapter 4) probe into whether intergenerational relationships of migrants are fundamentally different from native families through a study of attitudes and practices of children towards their parents. They find that attitudes do indeed differ (although less so in the second generation), with migrants of both the first and second generations showing a high level of sense of commitment, suggesting that familial obligations are indeed among the core values of the migrant groups surveyed. However, they also show that actual support received by parents does not correlate to sense of obligation on the part of children or expectations on the part of parents. While the overall level of expectations and support received are higher among migrants, Schans and De Valk show that differences are less pronounced in terms of actual support received. In the type of support provided by children to parents, though, they also find important differences. However, they stress that the quality of the relationship with the child seems to be a much more important factor than origin in explaining support behaviour.

Expectations – or more precisely, contradictory expectations held by different actors or created by different normative orders – are also at the centre of Empez Vidal's case study of Moroccan unaccompanied minors (chapter 5). As Empez Vidal argues, the migration of unaccompanied minors from Morocco to Spain needs to be placed in the broader context of South-North relations, differences in wealth, related migration expectations that unaccompanied minors and their families have in terms of improving access to resources and achieving upward social mobility. This is also as a livelihood strategy and a specific opportunity structure that renders the migration of an unaccompanied minor a promising avenue to migration. In her analysis of what she calls the 'humanitarian window of opportunity', Empez Vidal reveals contradictions that result from the interaction between immigration law, the legal and child protection systems, the individual migration projects of unaccompanied minors and the expectations of their families left behind. Thus, while addressing neglect is the main objective and indeed the *raison d'être* of child protection services, the fact that proving neglect is a precondition for accessing child protection facilities and thereby, potentially, a legal status, generates real

neglect among the children studied by Empez Vidal. Similarly, reunifying children with their families at home, which is widely seen as the optimal way to address the situation of unaccompanied minors by child protection, often risks producing neglect at home – and thus beyond the reach of Spanish child protection services. Many of the tenets of the current situation – the desire of many young Moroccans to make their way to Spain, restrictive immigration policies, and humanitarian laws intent on protecting the most vulnerable – will prevail for the foreseeable future. Against this background, Empez Vidal concludes that there is little prospect that the fundamental contradictions characterising the current situation will change anytime soon.

The chapters in the second section, entitled ‘Gender, generation and work in the migrant family’, turn to the economic dimensions of family-related migration and investigate the role of familial arrangements in relation to employment of its members, family labour and the incorporation of family members in the labour market, more generally from different perspectives. The opening contribution (chapter 6) by Gillian Creese, Isabel Dyck and Arlene Tiger McLaren questions the pervasive dichotomy between the family as belonging to the non-productive, supposedly traditional sphere, and employment belonging to the productive, supposedly modern sphere. Using Bourdieu’s theory of different forms of capital, the authors investigate how female family members’ social and emotional capital is transformed in different ways and becomes integral to how the ‘human capital’ of immigration policy discourse can be enabled. Based on an in-depth longitudinal study of 25 immigrant households in Vancouver, they show how social capital of female family members enables processes of reskilling and labour market inclusion of husbands and how the domestic sphere is closely interwoven with the labour market activities of male family members. They thus conclude that far from being ‘unproductive’ and ‘problematic’, family migration appears as an interdependent family strategy focused on productive activities in which households develop family-based practices and goals.

The second chapter in this section, Christine Catarino and Laura Oso’s study of immigrant family businesses in Spain and France (chapter 7) similarly investigates the interlinkages between the family and employment activities through its focus on a case where the family unit coincides with the work unit. As they argue, the special characteristics of family businesses raise issues about the nature of the relationships between family members. Focusing on the nature of exchanges, labour commitment and bonds between family members of different generations involved in the family business, Catarino and Oso show that the nature of the commitment varies greatly between the subjects of their study, depending on age, position in the family, gender, nature and stage of the parents’ migration projects and how it is perceived by children, to name



but the most important determinants of labour commitment. While some children involved in their parents' business see their labour commitment as a moral obligation and a way to pay back some of the emotional and educational investments, among others, that their parents have invested in them, others see their work purely as a market exchange, while still others see it as a combination of the two. However, the chapter also emphasises the differences in the perception of intergenerational arrangements between different members of the family – parents, children and between siblings – suggesting that we need to consider the diversity of migrant experiences to fully comprehend family-related migration.

The concluding contribution in this section, Amparo González-Ferrer's study of family reunification processes and labour market inclusion in Spain (chapter 8) takes a different angle on the relationship between family migration, migrant families and the labour market. Based on an analysis of Spanish Labour Force Survey (LFS) data and official administrative statistics on family reunification, González-Ferrer finds that family-related migration has been substantial in Spain, contrary to what is suggested by official statistics published by the government. In addition, the LFS data show that the vast majority of married persons in Spain have successfully reunified with their spouses and have done so very fast, suggesting that migration had been a family strategy pursued from the outset, but also indicating soft enforcement of immigration regulations and resulting in reunification processes on the fringes of the law. As the LFS data show, the vast majority of family members enter the labour market, although displaying considerable gender differences, with women less likely to enter employment. As González-Ferrer notes, family migration status (i.e. whether a person is a first mover, or conversely, is joining another family member in Spain) is a key determinant of labour force participation. Reunified spouses are the category displaying the lowest labour force participation rates, with women showing considerably lower rates, which are, however, roughly equal to those of native Spanish women. Conversely, first movers who have reunified with their spouses have the highest labour force participation rates. One of the categories least likely to enter the labour market are foreign women who joined their husbands several years later, suggesting that fast family reunification is beneficial for labour market inclusion. González-Ferrer concludes that given the extent of differences in how families organise the family reunification process, which are associated with differential labour market outcomes, especially for women, policymakers need to take the potential consequences of visa and work permit restrictions into account when designing policies.

The chapters in the third section combine different perspectives on marriage migration and gender relations. While Panitee Suksumboon (chapter 9) and Annett Fleischer (chapter 10) adopt the point of view of

migrants involved in marriage migration, Yvonne Riaño (chapter 11) investigates the gendered conceptions of marriage as embodied in Swiss immigration legislation, interpreting them as an expression of Swiss gender norms. All three chapters highlight the role of the state in shaping marriage migration and gender relations within marriages.

In her study, Suksumboon shows Thai women's strategies to pursue marriage to foreign – in this case, Dutch – men. Suksumboon stresses that while it is true that marriages between Thai women and Dutch men take place in a context of global asymmetries of wealth, power, resources and status, the relationship cannot be reduced to economic motives and the desire to achieve social mobility through marriage migration. As she shows, idealised conceptions of marital relationships and positive, often exoticised imaginations of Thai women by Dutch men, and idealised images of *farang* ('foreign') men by Thai women play an important part in marriage motivations. In addition, constraints on the local marriage market, particularly for divorced women and women no longer considered attractive spouses in Thailand because of their age, also play a role. As Suksumboon shows, however, motivations and reasons for marriage migration are not uniform for Thai marriage migrants, depending on class, age, and origin within Thailand. Her study stresses the agency of the women involved, but also highlights the power of the state in the immigration context to constrain the scope for agency, often putting women in a difficult position during their first years of residence.

Like Suksumboon, Fleischer (chapter 10) studies marriage migration from the perspective of individual migrants. In her case, however, the focus is on foreign men – Cameroonians in Germany – marrying native German women. Her account of marriage and migration strategies of Cameroonian men is complementary, at times parallel to, but in many respects also a stark contrast to Suksumboon's account of Thai female marriage migrants. In both cases, exoticised imaginations of the Other play a key role in forging relationship between the two concerned partners. In contrast to Suksumboon's case, however, where the initial encounter between the future spouses takes place in Thailand, helped by long-standing traditions of match-making in the context of Thailand's tourist industry and the existence of specialised dating agencies and online dating fora, the encounter in the case of Cameroonian men takes place in the country of immigration and is often a response to the need to regularise an insecure legal status. The latter also generates institutionalised suspicion from authorities involved. In this context, spouses are required to conform to closely policed notions of a 'good marriage' and a marriage based on affection and love, which the spouses must constantly prove. At the same time, the importance of marriage for some migrants contrasts starkly with the decline of marriage as the sole legitimate form of couple relationship in mainstream German society.

Similar contradictions between immigration law, changing societal attitudes and practices towards marriage and gender equality are highlighted by Riaño (chapter 11). Her study of the position of spouses under Swiss immigration law focuses on the contradictions between the promotion of gender equality by mainstream society, on the one hand, and the creation of unequal, 'traditional' relationships through restrictive residence regulations, on the other. Riaño observes that binational marriages appear as a particular case of asymmetric power relations within the family: whereas a Swiss husband enjoys full citizenship rights, those of the foreign spouse are limited. Swiss immigration regulations do not foresee an economic role for foreign spouses because they are expected to 'remain with their husbands'. Women also experience considerable pressure from Swiss society to conform to a child-rearing role. Traditional gender roles are thus, directly or indirectly, set: the Swiss man as breadwinner and the foreign woman as homemaker, thus perpetuating patriarchal gender roles and values. Riaño concludes that unequal gender relations within migrant families cannot simply be interpreted as resulting from supposedly 'backward' ethnic values, as it is often contended in integration debates, but as an outcome of the patriarchal values that underpin immigration regulations in particular, and Swiss gender norms in general.

The chapters in the fourth section highlight the importance of family ties and obligations in shaping migratory decisions and circulation in a transnational context. Their focus is on care arrangements and the role of care responsibilities in influencing migrants' decision-making and practices.

Ludovica Banfi and Paolo Boccagni's empirical studies of three women-led migratory streams into Italy – Ecuadorians, Polish and Ukrainian women – (chapter 12) draw out the differences and commonalities between the groups in terms of age, life cycle and legal opportunities available in different migration regimes. An element common to all three cases studied by Banfi and Boccagni is that women's responsibility in economic and moral terms towards their families at home is a key driver of their migration. However, concrete arrangements and family practices associated with migration differ greatly between the groups, in particular as far as children are concerned as well as with regard to partners, where there is a broad continuum of practices ranging from eventual family reunification either in Italy or in the country of origin to family disruption. As the authors find, a key aspect influencing the evolution of family practices at a distance and the ensuing differences between the three groups is the interaction between individual's migratory projects and structural factors, notably the legal framework for migration, labour demand and geographical proximity and related costs, all of which impact the ability to circulate transnationally or, conversely, to choose between being 'here' and 'there'.

Banfi and Boccagni, however, also highlight how the term ‘transnational’ is perhaps more appropriate for intergenerational relations, which are more intense and involve active provision of care, than when applied to couple relationships, where transnational practices seem to be of an altogether vaguer nature and are much more diverse compared to relations with children.

Paola Bonizzoni (chapter 13) looks in more depth at some of these structural factors that impact family practices in a migration context, based on a case study of Latin American women in Milan. She highlights the diversity of the women’s immigration status and the way their immigration status facilitates or obstructs the ability to reconstitute the family in a transnational context. As Bonizzoni shows, many families are trapped in a transnational existence, having neither the resources nor the legal rights to reunify with their families. If they manage to reunify, they often do so only after long periods of separation. In addition, their weak labour market position frequently means that striking a balance between working and family time presents a major challenge for them. In addition, it creates or exacerbates tensions within the family. Using the concepts of ‘civic stratification’ and ‘stratified reproduction’, Bonizzoni shows the effect of combining restrictive immigration policies with feminised forms of low-wage labour: the constraint on families’ ability to reconstitute themselves and the simultaneous shaping of lives, practices and conflicts within the families.

The major part of the literature on transnational family lives and practices focuses on low-skilled migrants, often based on the tacit assumption that skilled and highly skilled migrants are much less likely to engage in or be affected by transnational family practices, and that their migration is primarily driven by individual economic motivations, on the one hand, and the demand for skilled labour, on the other. While migration studies have increasingly uncovered social and family ties as an important factor shaping migrants’ decision-making in general, highly skilled migration is still largely analysed within a framework of methodological individualism. In this vein, frequently used conceptions of highly skilled migration such as the ‘circulation of talent’ or ‘migration of skills’ conceive highly skilled migrants as individuals for whom social and family ties seem to be irrelevant in making decisions about their migration. Auréli Varrel’s case study of highly skilled Indian migrants returning from the US to India (chapter 14) questions these assumptions and shows how a sense of commitment and moral obligation towards other family members who stay behind, notably parents, as well as the desire to transmit Indian cultural identities to children, is an important aspect of migratory decisions of the respondents in her study. However, the return process is not decoupled from economic decisions and is strategically employed by some to advance careers. However, as Varrel shows, return does have differen-

tial implications for men and women. It often results in a complex re-composition of generational and gender roles in the family, as well as the spatial reorganisation of the family members – the relocation of members of the nuclear family and extended family across the Indian subcontinent, the reshaping of migrants' nuclear families into Indian extended families and the exclusion of skilled women from the workforce. Far from being a smooth process, the 'circulation of skills' thus raises many of the same intergenerational and gender issues as the migration of any other migrants.

In the concluding chapter to this section, Venetia Evergeti and Louise Ryan (chapter 15) critically reflect on the burgeoning literature on transnational families and transnational care arrangements, highlighting the need to acknowledge the diversity of migrants' experiences and use appropriate methods and theorisations that reflect this diversity. As they observe, the focus of much of the literature on transnational families on disadvantaged female migrants has led to an underestimation of the diversity and fluidity of migratory experiences, strategies and caring practices developed in a transnational context. They call for a more nuanced understanding of how migrants organise and deal with family responsibilities 'here' and 'there', and how family practices and responsibilities mediated by age, class, skill level, stage in the life cycle and migration status. To achieve such a nuanced understanding, they highlight the importance of utilising ethnographic and qualitative methods that capture both the local and global context of the everyday reality of transnational families.

## 1.5 Conclusion

As described in this introductory chapter, family migration is growing in significance in academic writing and policymaking both at national and European levels. Yet despite the importance of the family in the process and course of migration, family migrations in their different forms remain weakly theorised and marginal in migration studies. Considerable benefit would be derived from bringing closer together the insights of family sociology and migration studies. It would help our understanding of contemporary families, many of which have been shaped by migratory movements. Families are diverse, complex and fluid; they are the nexus in which economic, social and political processes come together as do processes of production and reproduction. We need not just study the family as a unit, but also to examine its different members and the relationships between genders and generations, as well as the ways in which they are altered in the course of migration.

A theme running through this chapter has been the impact of the state

and its regulatory framework in shaping and constraining families in migration. The family, its members and key moments of change and reproduction, such as marriage, have become a major object of national and European policymaking. National regulations have constricted the ability of certain families to live transnationally yet, at the same time, the quest for greater mobility, intended primarily for European citizens, has been used strategically by non-European family members of such citizens. So although EU law may in fact be more conservative in its conception of the family than in some member states, its vision of the relationship between the citizen and the state differs.

To gain a fuller understanding of the structure of families and changes engendered in the course of migration, we need to use a variety of methodologies, as the chapters in this volume have done. Analysis of official statistics and large-scale surveys can illuminate current trends and establish correlations and (in some instances) causal relations. Quantitative analysis also can help illuminate family norms, conceptions of the family and family life and attitudes towards intergenerational obligations. Qualitative analysis (biographical interviews and focus groups) enables us to probe in greater depth the interaction between different processes, migrant strategies and changing identities. Analyses of legislation, policy documents, legal texts, case law and administrative records allow us to comprehend the ways families are shaped by, and respond to, immigration regulations. Comparative analyses between nationalities and nation-states, both within the EU and beyond, are also required for elucidating the relationship between family forms and immigration policies. Thus, multi-sited ethnographic methods (Marcus 1995), transnational survey designs and multi-national case study approaches focusing on different ends of the migration process are particularly appropriate to study processes of family migration and family practices in a transnational context. Transnational research designs can also fruitfully be employed for studying the impact of receiving countries' policies on changes in family arrangements and relationships. However, as important as utilising different methodologies and studying family-related migration from different disciplinary perspectives may be, it is crucial to let these different insights speak to each other, as we have attempted to do here.

With this volume, we hope to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of family dimensions of international migration, while also showing the centrality of family dimensions to all international migration. Similarly, we hope this publication encourages future research that overcomes boundaries, disciplinary and otherwise, and understands family dimensions of international migration in all its diversity and complexity.

## Notes

- 1 Examples of family migration projects include the Familles et Couples Binationalaux en Europe (Fabienne 2000-2001); Gender Relationships in Europe at the Turn of the Millennium: Women as Subjects in Migration and Marriage (GRINE 2001-2004, [http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/projects/o55\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/projects/o55_en.html)); Civic Stratification, Gender and Family Migration Policies in Europe (2006-2008; <http://research.icmpd.org/1445.html>); HEIRAT Female Marriage Migrants: Awareness Raising and Violence Prevention (2002-2004, [http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/daphnetoolkit/html/organisations/dpt\\_org\\_de\\_307\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/daphnetoolkit/html/organisations/dpt_org_de_307_en.html)).
- 2 Examples of family migration conferences include Transnationalism, Family Ties, and Migration in Europe, (13-14 December 2007, Paris); and Families, Construction of Foreignness and Migration in 20th Century Western Europe (15-16 May 2008, Leuven). Five panels at the Seventh European Social Science History Conference (26 February – 1 March 2008, Lisbon) focused on family migration, while a sixth explored the role of family migration in history and several others featured papers addressing family-related migration.
- 3 We use the term ‘binational marriage’ rather than alternatives such as ‘bicultural marriage’ to highlight that public debates around these marriages are not just about cultural difference and ‘mixity’, but are very much linked to citizenship and residence rights. In our usage, the term, however, designates marriages involving spouses of different cultural or ethnic background and of different citizenship. See also our discussions of binational and transnational co-ethnic marriages in chapter sections 1.2.4 and 1.2.5, respectively.
- 4 See also the research programme Children’s Mobility and Immobility in Transnational Family Migration at the Peace Research Institute (PRIO) in Oslo (<http://www.prio.no/Research-and-Publications/Project/?oid=96563>).
- 5 Although Faist’s study draws extensively on Boyd’s work and highlights the role of networks – both for dynamics of international migration and the emergence of transnational social spaces – it is interesting to note how little attention he pays to family-related migration.
- 6 This section draws on results from the project Civic Stratification, Gender, and Family Migration Policies in Europe (Kraler 2010a).
- 7 Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the European Council of 29 April 2004 on the right of citizens of the union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the member states.
- 8 Rights enjoyed by beneficiaries of the directive may only be suspended on serious grounds of public policy or in cases of grave violation of the law.
- 9 Council Directive 2003/109/EC of 25 November 2003 concerning the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents.
- 10 There is a growing interest in unaccompanied minors in Europe. See, for example, the conference Migration of Unaccompanied Minors in Europe: Contexts of Origin, Migration Routes and Reception Systems (10-11 October 2007, Poitiers) (Hernandez 2008); UNICEF [http://www.unicef-irc.org/research/resource\\_pages/migration/index.html](http://www.unicef-irc.org/research/resource_pages/migration/index.html); and a recent project undertaken by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA 2010) investigating the social situation of unaccompanied asylum seekers in selected EU Member States.
- 11 It seems, however, that there are marked gender differences in terms of patterns of migration and matchmaking. Thus, tourism and internet dating seem to be much more important for female marriage migrants, while professional

matchmaking agencies almost exclusively offer foreign women to male clients. In addition, marriage after entry seems to be more important for male migrants (see also Fleischer this volume).

- 12 These suspicions, in turn, often mirror an institutionalised suspicion emanating from the state. Mixed couples are thus frequently suspected of living in a marriage of convenience not only in the eyes of state authorities, but also their very own friends and relatives (Strasser et al. 2009).
- 13 For major themes addressed in current research on this topic, see also information about the conference held on 20-21 November 2008 at the Peace Research Institute (PRIO) in Oslo on transnational parenting and children left behind (<http://www.prio.no/Research-and-Publications/Migration/Transnational-parenthood-and-children-left-behind>).
- 14 De-familisation refers to 'the degree to which households' welfare and caring responsibilities are relaxed – either via welfare state provision or via market provision' (Esping-Andersen 1999), though does not consider the use of migrant labour.
- 15 One of the rare studies on fathering in a migration context is a project funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and coordinated by Julia Brannen at the Institute of Education, University of London: Fathers across Three Family Generations in Polish, Irish and UK Origin White Families (May 2009 – October 2011) is (see <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/study/departments/tcr/16157.html>).

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## **Section I**

The family as a moral and social order



## **2 Sex and the regulation of belonging: Dutch family migration policies in the context of changing family norms**

*Sarah van Walsum*

### **2.1 Introduction**

In recent years, the Netherlands has drawn international attention by requiring that family migrants originating from less industrially developed nations in Africa, Asia and South America pass a Dutch language and integration test in their countries of origin, before they can be admitted into the country.<sup>1</sup>

When defending these policies before Dutch Parliament, former Minister for Immigration and Integration Affairs Rita Verdonk linked assumed differences between Dutch norms regarding family relations and sexuality and those of 'non-Western' migrants to perceived threats to the stability of Dutch society as a whole. In her words:

failed integration can lead to marginalisation and segregation as a result of which people can turn their back on society and fall back on antiquated norms and values, making them susceptible to the influence of a small group inclined to extremism and terrorism ... Ongoing radicalisation implies the real risk that non-integrated aliens will take an anti-Western stance and will assail fundamental values and norms generally accepted in Western Society such as equality of men and women, non-discrimination of homosexuals and freedom of expression.<sup>2</sup>

In the context of a debate concerning family migration from 'non-Western' nations, the message is clear. Unless these family migrants can be screened for the proper norms, values and skills before being granted entry, they will form a threat to the Dutch nation. Given its selective bias, this particular aspect of Dutch family migration policies has been dubbed racist by its opponents. In more general terms, Dutch family migration policies have been compared to the racist policies that used to distinguish the rulers from the ruled in the former colony of the Dutch East Indies (De Hart 2003a).

To my mind, one should be careful when drawing such parallels. There is danger in depicting the present as an automatic sequel to a racist past. A significant period of European history following the Second World War,

namely, that of decolonisation and the rejection of racist ideology, risks being brushed aside as atypical, while an important legacy of that period – the equal rights of all citizens of the European Union, regardless of their race, creed or ethnic background – risks losing the attention and activism that it needs in order to survive as a vital element of European politics.

When drawing parallels between the present and the past, it is important to pay close attention to changes in historical context. As Stoler (1995) has argued, the racist regime of the former Dutch East Indies was grounded in assumptions concerning biologically determined differences deemed relevant for the quality of citizenship. Establishing and maintaining racial distinctions therefore depended on the regulation of biological and cultural reproduction through the control of sexuality. This was achieved by, among other things, criminal sanctions against forbidden sexual practices, welfare benefits that gave substance to a regime of inclusion and exclusion and family laws that linked racial status to legitimate family ties. This regime was gendered as well as racist in that it protected European men's privileges both as men and as Europeans. It was they who determined whether or not the children of their 'native' concubines could acquire European status, while a marriage between a 'native' man and a European woman resulted in her losing the privileged status of European – not in his gaining it (De Hart 2003a; Stoler 1995).

The actual implementation of this regime thus belied the biological assumptions that it was grounded on, making it unstable but also amenable to change (Stoler 1995). Even then, however, it was not so flexible as to be able to adjust to the current historical context that is marked by a double legacy: the period of decolonisation and anti-racism, as mentioned above, and a sexual revolution that has ousted marriage as the sole legitimate site of sexuality and rejected, or at least seriously challenged, the hierarchies between the genders and the generations laid down by Dutch family law of the pre-war period. Any attempts to place current immigration policies in the racist tradition of the Dutch colonial past must take these shifts in normative context into account.

In this chapter I shall give a brief account of the normative changes that have taken place in the Netherlands in the course of the second half of the twentieth century. I shall relate these changes to developments that have taken place, during the same period, in the regulation of family migration to the Netherlands. Next I shall explore how the family migration regime that has taken shape at the end of the twentieth century relates to an emerging context of globalisation as theorised by, among others, Sassen. Finally, I shall question if and to what extent the racist legacy of the Dutch colonial past does indeed reverberate in the present-day context.

For purposes of analysis, I have found it useful to chart the relevant changes in the regulation of status (through family and nationality and immigration law) in conjunction with related changes in disciplinary

regimes. In my historical account, I shall therefore not only focus on Dutch family law and the regulation of family migration, but also take into consideration related changes that have taken place in Dutch social security, welfare and integration policies.

## **2.2 Changing family norms and Dutch family migration policies**

### **2.2.1 1945-1975: *The nuclear family and national reconstruction***

Initially, the moral order that was reinstated in the Netherlands following the Second World War was closely modelled on the one that had preceded it. Marriage as the sole site of legitimate sexual relations and the main portal to adult participation in Dutch society was vigorously enforced by the state following the war, while the regulation of daily interactions and practices within the confines of married life was outsourced to the same religious institutions and affiliated organisations that had structured civil society and political affiliation prior to it (Kooy 1997). This was also the moral order that had structured the racial distinctions in the former colony of the Dutch East Indies, and it was according to this moral order that the former ruler's population was ultimately distinguished from that of its former colony, Indonesia (Heijs 1994). The formal claims of repatriates to admission to the Netherlands were based on their legal descent from, or marriage to, a Dutch male citizen, as determined by Dutch family law. Decisions to actually facilitate or discourage their repatriation were based on evaluation, by government officials and Christian social workers, of their behaviour in terms of class, language and religiously and culturally shaped practices (Schuster 1999; Ringeling 1978). Dutch family law and Dutch religious institutions thus played an important role in regulating post-colonial migration from the newly established nation of Indonesia to the Netherlands.

Besides having to reconstitute the population of the nation, the post-war government of the Netherlands also had to orchestrate the project of national reconstruction, one of industrialisation, urbanisation and mass consumption (Gastelaars 1985). A newly established Ministry of Social Work coordinated the work involved in guiding individuals and families through the changes in lifestyle that this implied. A growing number of increasingly professional social workers became involved in monitoring family relations. In doing so, they confirmed the role of Dutch family law in defining the contours of legitimate family life and continued to facilitate the disciplinary work of the religious institutions and their affiliated organisations among lower-class families. At the same time, however, they introduced a new perspective on the nuclear family as a discrete and self-sufficient unit, while an increasingly elaborate framework of nationally

orchestrated social insurances, provisions and services helped render previously established networks of interdependency – extended families and religious congregations – redundant (Kooy 1975; Gastelaars 1985; Kennedy 1995).

Not only the urban poor and those who had been uprooted or disoriented by the war, but also the hundreds of thousands of former colonials who had left Indonesia for the Netherlands during the 1950s and early 1960s were included in this project of social integration and national reconstruction. The project focussed on shared territory, the common trauma of occupation and the collective effort of reconstruction in linking together nation, state and citizens (Schuster 1999). Not included were the guest workers who were being recruited to provide extra hands for the reconstruction effort. The guiding assumption was that these workers were to be kept primed for return to their countries of origin. The first labour migration recruitments of the late 1950s actually excluded married candidates, on the assumption that bachelors could be counted on to return home and establish a family (Groenendijk 1990). Dutch housing policies that restricted migrant workers' access to public housing furthermore discouraged or, at least, delayed family reunification, thus inhibiting integration into post-war Dutch society that was being built around the figure of the male breadwinner and head of the family (Jansen 2006).

### 2.2.2 *Sexual revolution and national solidarity*

Successive coalitions between confessional parties and parties alternatively sympathetic to labour and business, as well as tripartite agreements between government, employers' organisations and trade unions, generated the rules and practices that were to further shape the post-war welfare state of the Netherlands. The liberal tenets of individual freedom and equality formed the normative point of reference, and the male breadwinner citizen was the chief addressee (Bussemaker 1993). He, his spouse and children became both the organising unit of the Dutch welfare state and the focal point of new disciplinary programmes designed to prime men and women for the exigencies of industrial production, mass consumption and the bureaucratic regulation of services and provisions.

In 1965 a national system of welfare benefits was introduced. All citizens were now to have equal access to a minimum of financial security provided on grounds of national membership, rather than on the basis of religiously informed relations of interdependency. Initially meant to strengthen the financial foundations of the nuclear family, these new measures in effect facilitated avoidance of, and the escape from, the confines of matrimony – a tendency that would be encouraged even more by the liberalisation of divorce laws six years later. As divorced wives and single mothers applied for financial support from the state, latent tensions

between the dependencies and hierarchies regulated through Dutch family law and the new moral order based on the ideals of equality, individual emancipation and national solidarity started to become manifest (Holtmaat 1992).

### 2.2.3 *Normative pluralism and multiculturalism: 1975-1990*

As in the other welfare states of the post-war period, in the Netherlands, the 1970s also formed a period of economic crisis due, in part, to the oil crisis, but also to a generally experienced crisis of accumulation. As unemployment started to rise, questions concerning the limits of state responsibility and the reach of national solidarity became acute. But while a consensus was obtained on the need to limit labour migration, restricting family migration proved more problematic, as did the related issue of renegotiating the distribution of social risks and dependencies.

Increasingly, norms of alliance as determined through family law came to be hotly contested, while various (and conflicting) scenarios for sexual emancipation were propagated by men, women and sexually active minors (Kooy 1975; Peters 1976). Although the confessional parties continued to resist any further reforms to Dutch family law (Gastelaars 1985), in the course of the 1970s, non-marital relationships came to be treated more on par with marriage by the Dutch civil law courts (Van de Wiel 1974), while unwed mothers and illegitimate children lost much of their public stigma (Holtrust 1993). Within Dutch society, family relationships came to be seen more in terms of contractual arrangements between free and equal individuals, and less in terms of the strictly regulated and religiously sanctioned hierarchical institutions of the 1950s and early 1960s (Kooy 1997; Brinkgreve & Korzec 1978).

As gender inequality was questioned, Dutch women acquired the statutory right to keep their nationality upon marrying a foreign spouse, and foreign women no longer automatically acquired Dutch nationality upon marrying a Dutchman. In Dutch immigration law, women were no longer assumed to follow a foreign husband to his country of origin, but acquired the right to establish family life in the Netherlands with their foreign spouse (De Hart 2003a). It was no longer self-evident that the national unity of the nuclear family had to be preserved by having the wife follow her husband. The experienced reality of many people residing within Dutch territory – namely, that nations were not discrete entities, but inextricably linked to each other through cross-border intimacy (see Knop 2001) – became legally manifest. Not only were the normative foundations of the post-war welfare state being put to question; so were its personal and territorial limits.

While the religiously based moral order of the Dutch imperial past was being challenged from within, it was also being challenged from outside.

As one former colony after the other acquired national sovereignty during the first three decades following the Second World War, the equality of worth between the newly established national populations and their former colonial rulers came to be internationally acknowledged. Racist distinctions drawn along the lines of family alliance and behaviour, sexual or otherwise, that had previously served to distinguish the imperial rulers from the ruled, lost their legitimacy. In their stead, territory, a racially neutral mode of belonging and constitutive of the concept of the nation became more significant. When the former Dutch colony of Surinam acquired independence in 1975, shared territory, rather than legally defined family bonds, formed the primary criterion for distinguishing the population of the former metropole from that of the newly established nation (Heijs 1994). What's more, the prevalence of non-marital relationships among the Surinamese did not disqualify them from admission to the Netherlands, but rather prompted the reform of Dutch family migration policies and even, one could argue, of Dutch family law (see Van de Wiel 1974).

### **2.3 The emancipated individual as the new touchstone of the nation**

Through the course of the 1980s, in the field of social policy, Dutch authorities finally succeeded in reconciling individual rights to sexual freedom with the public task of controlling economic interdependency by disassociating the one from the other. On the one hand, marital status became disassociated from the gendered division of paid and unpaid labour. Men and women were now assumed to share their earning and caring responsibilities on an equal basis and according to their own preferences. On the other hand, all adults who shared the same household were assumed to support each other financially, regardless of whether or not their relationship involved sex (Bouwens 1997). The Dutch state no longer focused on enforcing the gendered institution of marriage as the only legitimate site for the reproduction of citizenship, but on the enforcement, via social policies, of individual self-sufficiency. The prototype of the citizen was no longer the male breadwinner and head of the family, but the responsible individual who made sure he or she did not become a burden to the state.

Public issues that had previously been represented as a shared national responsibility now came to be formulated in terms of 'individual responsibility', from family housing and old-age pensions to education and health care. Plans for nationally funded child-care were dropped from the political agenda almost before they had reached it. Parenthood was seen as both an individual choice and an individual responsibility (Bussemak-



er 1993). Similarly, neglect and abuses of power within the family were no longer seen as symptoms of social ills to be set right by the welfare state, but as individual failings requiring individual solutions. To the extent that issues like gender discrimination and gendered violence were still perceived of as social and/or cultural issues, this now only applied to 'developing' countries assumed to still be caught up in the archaic traditions of patriarchy (Boerefijn, Van der Liet-Senders & Loenen 2000).

At the same time, women admitted as marriage migrants and originating from those same 'developing' countries were banking on Dutch feminists' critique of gender inequality and gendered violence to contest the dependent nature of their status under Dutch immigration law (Land et al. 1988). And where Dutch fathers were appealing to their right to respect for family life in order to maintain parental responsibility and visiting rights with their children following divorce, migrant fathers with children in the Netherlands started to appeal to the very same right to prevent being separated from their children by deportation (Van Walsum 2003).

In attempts to strengthen their claims to residence rights in the Netherlands, family migrants thus engaged with political and legal strategies developed by Dutch men and women struggling to reformulate the normative order of family relations in the Netherlands. In doing so, these family migrants inadvertently provided support for the notion that equality, individual freedom and human rights did indeed form the natural foundation for a new code of family law in the Netherlands.

### 2.3.1 *A new consensus in Dutch family law; new grounds for exclusion: 1990-2000*

In the 1990s a new consensus was finally reached in Dutch family law, a consensus largely based on the liberal tenets of individual freedom, equality and the right to respect for family and private life. In many ways, this new code of family law was the negative image of the code of alliances that had regulated legitimate family bonds in the Netherlands up until the early 1970s. Heterosexuality was no longer prescribed, men and women were assumed to be equal and the hierarchy between the generations was softened. Marriage no longer formed the prerequisite for participation in respectable society; it had become a matter of taste. Couples could choose from a variety of arrangements, and parental involvement in children's upbringing formed a right that could be expressed in different degrees of involvement and via various modes of attachment: legal, biological or social. Sexual preferences, the division of labour between spouses and decisions concerning the upbringing of children were thus seen as a matter of personal choice and not to be dictated by a public morality (Henstra 2000; Loenen 2003).

Individual freedom and personal responsibility also figured large in

the new integration policies being launched in this period. Language and integration requirements were introduced in order to groom the 'problem migrant' for the competitive lifestyle that stood model for the new notion of Dutch citizenship. In this context, the liberal and secular terms that had come to inform Dutch family law were presented as the natural touchstones of Dutch identity, and the 'problem migrant' was presented as its antithesis (Dutch Ministry of Internal Affairs 1994). In this the Netherlands was not unique. For example, Ralph Grillo (this volume) also observes how throughout Western Europe, the 'migrant family' is increasingly being presented as a site characterised by patriarchal relationships and illiberal practices, and thereby as an obstacle to integration.

In the meantime, controlling immigration was becoming less about controlling the number of immigrants being admitted onto Dutch territory. Freedom of movement formed the increasingly emphatic doctrine of an expanding European Union and immigration as such was no longer presented as a problem in Dutch policy documents (Dutch Ministry of Internal Affairs 1994). More and more, immigration law and policy came to be about facilitating the admission of those who were expected to fit into the new normative order and rejecting and – if need be – expelling those who were not, regardless of how intimately they might be bound to Dutch society.

## **2.4 Changes in the relationship between family and nation: 1945-2000**

As discussed above, during the period immediately following the Second World War, disciplinary control of sexuality had been combined with the legal definition of marital status and legitimate descent to redraw the personal borders of the Dutch nation. But as sexual norms became more contested in the course of the 1960s and 1970s, disciplining sexual behaviour ceased to be an effective means for regulating inclusion and exclusion. By 1985, the equal treatment of men and women and of married and unmarried couples had to a large extent been realised, both in nationality and immigration law. A family's right to reside was no longer formally dependent on the male breadwinner's nationality. Neither gender nor family law status could serve anymore to regulate access to citizenship.

Moreover, by the mid-1980s, once migrants acquired access to Dutch territory, they could claim inclusion in the emerging egalitarian discourse of the national welfare state that collapsed physical presence on national territory with citizenship and state responsibility. Thus, up until 1990, immigration control and ethnic minorities policy continued to form distinct channels of state power. Controlling immigration at the nation's borders and managing social tensions and inequalities within them were

seen as distinct policy objectives, targeting different populations. The number of foreigners being admitted had to be kept to a minimum so that the project of national integration could be held at manageable proportions, but members of minorities already present on Dutch territory were to be treated as full – albeit culturally distinct – members of Dutch society. Once legally resident, immigrants were no longer seen as objects of immigration control.<sup>3</sup>

But because dominant notions of citizenship continued to be linked to the notion of the nuclear family as the basic unit of society, applying territorial limits that might cut through transnational families – rather than between them – remained problematic. And given the egalitarian ambitions of the nationalist project of social democracy, allowing some members of the Dutch nation rights in the sphere of family life that were denied to others was not a viable option either.<sup>4</sup>

#### 2.4.1 *The flip side to equality: Levelling down*

Equality on its own, however, need not spell inclusion. The history of Dutch nationality and immigration law provides a number of examples of how reforms designed to produce equality nevertheless failed to extend a secure claim on family life in the Netherlands to a broader segment of the population. Instead, these reforms resulted in a levelling down: of men with regards to women; of married couples with unmarried couples; of Dutch citizens with immigrants (Van Walsum 2004).

Up until 1985, foreign family members of Dutch men had easy access to an unassailable right to residence via Dutch nationality law. After 1985, Dutch men's foreign wives and step-children had to apply for naturalisation on the same basis as the foreign family members of Dutch women. However, a special immigration law status still applied to all the family members of Dutch citizens and permanently settled immigrants, protecting them against deportation on whatever grounds as long as the family bond lasted. As of January 1994, however, foreign family members could no longer enjoy any such protected status. Protecting the social cohesion of Dutch society had become more important than protecting the integrity of family life (De Hart 2003a).

A second example of levelling down involves the relationship between parents and children. At the same time that the nationality law reforms of 1985 enabled Dutch mothers to pass on their Dutch nationality to their children at birth on the same basis as Dutch fathers, foreign mothers' liaisons with Dutch men ceased to pave a way to admission for their children. In the course of the 1980s and 1990s, policies regarding the admission of foreign children and step-children as well as the rules regarding their naturalisation were modified. The net result was that parents and step-parents who, for whatever reason, had waited to apply for family reunifi-

cation and who had, in the meantime, left their foreign children in the care of family abroad were assumed to no longer have a family bond with those children and hence did not qualify for reunification. And since children could only share in the naturalisation of a parent *after* the child was legally admitted to the Netherlands, it could even be the case after the parent involved had acquired Dutch citizenship.<sup>5</sup>

A third example of levelling down is the change that took place in the application of income requirements. Initially, these requirements were informed by the gendered model of the male breadwinner citizen and privileged married couples over unmarried ones and Dutch citizens over foreigners. By the turn of the century, the government had announced its intention to eliminate all such distinctions – subjecting all cross-border families to the same financial restrictions to reunification. Not only had formal distinctions between men and women and between married and unmarried couples disappeared, the privileges of Dutch citizens with foreign family members vis-à-vis newly admitted foreigners had also largely disappeared.<sup>6</sup>

Anyone, then – male or female, black or white – who wished to bring family members to the Netherlands had to be willing and able to bear the full brunt of the costs. And anyone who wished to stay following a divorce had to be solidly linked to Dutch society via a long-term labour contract, regardless of conflicting care responsibilities or other hindrances possibly experienced on the Dutch labour market. Given the structural differences in income and labour market participation between men and women and between dominant and ethnically marked groups, income requirements and requirements of labour market participation continued to hinder the admission of the foreign family members of women and/or members of ethnic minorities more than that of the family members of ethnically Dutch males (Van Walsum 2003). Gender and ethnic origin thus continued to play a role, albeit indirectly.

#### 2.4.2 *Some more equal than others after all*

The universal application of income requirements was justified in terms of individual responsibility and the virtues of labour market participation, the touchstones of the new integration policies of the 1990s. The goals of integration policy thus became intertwined after all with those of immigration law. This occurred in other ways as well. The exclusion of children who had been left behind in their parents' country of origin came to be justified on the grounds that their foreign upbringing had made them an 'integration risk'.<sup>7</sup> Substantive controls of both marital and parent-child relations imposed a specific normative order while also serving to further restrict the volume of family migration. Finally, substantive controls premised on the normative assumption that shared residence was constitutive of fami-

ly life came to interfere with a growing arsenal of bureaucratic instruments designed to inhibit or delay international mobility.<sup>8</sup> The net result was that it became more difficult for migrants to claim inclusion in the Dutch nation on the basis of time spent in the Netherlands living as a family with a Dutch or legally resident spouse, partner, parent or child.

No longer kept separate from each other, the regimes of immigration law and integration policies merged to mutually reinforce each other. Premised as they were on the assumption that specific groups of immigrants threatened the new moral order of individual responsibility, sexual emancipation and gender equality, Dutch integration policies gave extra urgency to the task of controlling immigration and helped justify the erosion of a right that had previously been held to be self-evident: that of the Dutch breadwinner citizen to establish himself permanently and unconditionally within the Dutch nation, together with his family members, whether foreign or not – a right that Betty de Hart (2007) has defined as ‘the right to domicile’.

The production of a new code of Dutch family law formed an important step in this process. By the end of the twentieth century, the family – the former keystone of society – had lost much of its substance. Heterosexual marriage was no longer being enforced as the only legitimate form of family life, but neither was it being protected as an institution. Homosexuality and non-marital sex had lost their stigma, but matrimony had lost its sanctity. Husband and wife were no longer brought together by God; the state could be justified in separating them in the national interest. While the relationship between parent and child did still enjoy a strong degree of protection, particularly in the realm of international law, it, too, had become more vulnerable to state intervention. The parent-child relationship had become differentiated, based on various grounds, to be enjoyed in varying degrees of intensity and to be shared among varying coalitions of parenting adults. The complexities, choices and negotiations that this implied justified the notion that not everyone would be equipped with the necessary skills and maturity to cope. Like citizenship, family life had become a matter of individual responsibility, but one that allowed for, and even required monitoring by, a tutorial state. The intimate sphere had once more become an accessible locus for exercising state power.

#### 2.4.3 *Which families? Whose nation?*

Law and culture are not all of a piece. In the course of the 1990s, family norms came to be applied in other fields of Dutch public law in much the same way as they were being applied in Dutch immigration law. As noted above, forced interdependency between adults increased during the 1990s not only because of changing immigration policies, but also under the influence of changes in Dutch social security and welfare policies. And in

that context, too, providing unpaid care became a less accepted alternative for paid employment. At the same time, the Dutch state was claiming a greater say in the upbringing of children of *all* parents deemed incompetent or at risk, not just those of immigrant parents (Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport 1996).

What the renewed focus on cultural difference obscured then was that, more and more, family migrants and a specific class of 'national' Dutch family members were finding themselves in the same boat: adult interdependency, reduced state support for parental care and increased state involvement in the upbringing of children. The Dutch government claimed the restrictions it imposed on family migration were necessary to protect personal freedoms depicted as typical of Dutch national identity. In fact, these restrictions fit – some were actually explicitly included – in programmes of control that not only affected family migrants and their family members in the Netherlands. They also applied to all those resident in the Netherlands – foreign and national – who, on the basis of the new concept of citizenship, might be perceived of as maladapted or even threatening to the new normative order of the nation. Programmes focusing on parental skills, for example, played a role in both crime prevention and integration policies.<sup>9</sup>

At the same time, certain categories of family migrants now actually enjoyed a privileged position, in the sense that they were exempt from mandatory integration requirements. These privileged categories consisted of family members of labour migrants who had been granted a labour permit; economically active EU citizens who had made use of their freedom of movement within the EU; and EU citizens possessing sufficient means to be able to support themselves in the Netherlands.<sup>10</sup> The reason for their privileged position is clear. In the interests of an unencumbered labour market within the EU, and in the interest of attracting highly skilled labour from outside of the EU, measures had to be taken to prevent family ties from deterring the movement of privileged categories of labour. National citizens, born and bred in the Netherlands, were thus actually at a disadvantage compared to certain privileged classes of foreigners – at least with respect to their right to settle with their family members within Dutch territory.

Since 1990, then, the Dutch government has proven to be increasingly reluctant to take the intimate lives of its citizens into account in any positive fashion, whether in designing its social policies, or in regulating family migration. Yet, where the integration of the Dutch economy into an emergent system of transnational labour relations is at issue, concern for the exigencies of the intimate sphere suddenly revives. In the period immediately following the Second World War, measures designed to protect family life in the Netherlands had been the prerogative of the male breadwinner citizen; by the end of the twentieth century they had become

the privilege of a transnational elite of mobile and highly skilled professionals and managers.

## 2.5 The current historical context

There are striking similarities between the normative changes described in this chapter and those signalled elsewhere; the notion of 'individual responsibility' is a recurrent theme throughout. Glendon, for example, has given a detailed account of the developments that have taken place both in family law and social policies in the United States and in a number of Western European countries since the Second World War. Reviewing these changes, Glendon (1989: 292) remarks that 'not one of [the]... formerly basic assumptions has survived unchanged. Most have been eliminated, and some have been turned on their heads'. Not only in the Netherlands, family laws that were originally organised around a unitary conception of the family as marriage-centred and patriarchal have increasingly come to focus on the individual. The family is being broken down into its component parts and family members are being treated as separate, equal and independent.

Other authors, like Macklin (2002) and Barker (2007), have discussed changes in immigration and welfare policies in Canada and the US that parallel my own findings in those fields of law, as described in this chapter. They, too, signal a trend towards cuts in social spending and increased interdependency among adult citizens, on the one hand, and more restrictive and selective controls on family migration, on the other. And they, too, relate these developments to a shift in the logic of public interest, in which efficiency, individual self-reliance and market rationality have become the new touchstones of national identity and purpose. These replaced the organisation of social benefits as well as culturally sanctioned ideas about the national significance of the nuclear family and the family wage system that prevailed in the period of post-war social democracy – a period when the state was still committed to fostering a primarily national economy.

More individualist notions of citizenship have thus found their reflection in more individualist perceptions of family relations throughout the current so-called Western World. A problem the reviewed literature does not address, however, is how – in this context of increasing individualism – a sense of national belonging is to be maintained. And while the quoted authors warn that the power of the state is actually increasing, they do not discuss how, in a context of increased sexual freedom and egalitarian and atomised family relations, state power that was once mediated through family relations might now control individual behaviour.

### 2.5.1 *The possible relevance of a colonial past*

In her book *Territory, authority and rights* (2006), Sassen argues that the nationally oriented model of the democratic welfare state, dominant among the so-called Western industrial nations during the decades following the Second World War, has been giving way to a more globally oriented model of governance. As powerful economic actors (particularly transnational companies and financial institutions) have come to transcend national boundaries to a growing degree, they have increasingly divided their productive activities over various places, shifting the locus of those activities all the while. As a result, the role that state actors can play in organising, controlling and regulating economic activities and transactions has changed. In trying to attract and hold down increasingly mobile capital, national governments now tend to give more priority to the demands of transnationally operative businesses than to national social issues.

In this respect it is striking to note that, since the 1980s, the gap between rich and poor has increased throughout the world, creating an economic divide that increasingly cross-cuts national borders (Harvey 2005). Dirlik (2007), moreover, posits a shift of attention in the allocation of resources from the territorially defined spaces of national societies to nodes in global networks, the so-called global cities. He further notes the emergence of a transnational elite that participates in the top echelons of transnational production processes and global consumption patterns and shares not only similar occupations, but similar education and lifestyles as well. Not only is there increased attendance of elites from the third world in first world universities, but models of education and even university campuses are being exported from the first world to the third.

In her analysis of the shift that currently seems to be taking place from a nationally oriented order of the post-war welfare state to a more globally oriented neo-liberal one, Sassen emphasises how the processes she describes have not been pre-determined, but form the result of a complex chain of interaction. Of vital importance are certain capabilities, developed within a previous order, that – in a new historical context – can serve as part of a

new emergent organizing logic leading towards the constituting of a novel assemblage of key components... Rather than merely seeing an evolving transformation of the state as it adapts to new conditions, I see the particular combination of dynamics that produces a new organising logic as constitutive of foundational realignments inside the state. (Sassen 2006: 17)

Remarkably, Sassen does not include capabilities developed in the



specific context of colonial rule in her historical analysis. In fact, she dismisses the significance of colonialism for her central thesis on the grounds that colonial expansion formed part of the nationalist programme of the Western European nations under the Westphalian order, and that the colonial era was therefore not sufficiently distinct to merit specific attention. But while it may be true that the colonies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries formed part of competing nationalist projects, the colonial societies themselves were not national in the way that their metropolises were. With the arguable exception of settler colonies like Canada or Australia, the European colonies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were not self-ruling and democratic. On the contrary, these were deeply hierarchical societies, ruled from afar, and divided along racial lines. Where the metropolises were premised on a single national identity, the colonies were pluralist and cosmopolitan. Nationality was not the primary determinant of a person's legal status, but his or her racial affiliation. Thus, in the Dutch East Indies people of various national origin could be classified as 'European', 'native' or 'foreign Oriental'. Whether or not they were legally included within the Dutch nation was of secondary importance (Prins 1952).

Given these differences, it seems reasonable to expect that techniques of power, or 'capabilities', to use Sassen's term, which were developed in the colonial setting may not have been suited to regulating social relations within the nationalist order of the democratic welfare state, as it was established in the former metropolises following the Second World War and decolonisation. But capabilities developed in the specific context of colonial societies preceding the Second World War might conceivably suit the organising logic of a globally oriented order, as opposed to a more emphatically nationalist one.

## 2.6 Linking the present to the colonial past

In her book *Race and the education of desire* (1995), Stoler provides a historical analysis of racism as a technique of inclusion and exclusion that can and has been re-appropriated towards new ends within successive historical contexts. Stoler's historical analysis is that racism forms a discourse that can and has repeatedly been re-appropriated towards new ends within new historical contexts. She traces the history of racist discourse in Western political thinking back to a pre-modern era in which the aristocracy used the concept of race in narratives of war to challenge the God-given sovereignty of the monarch. In her rendition, the French revolution marked a point at which this discourse, that once served nobility in its resistance to the monarch, became generalised and confiscated by society at large. The racism of the nineteenth century subsequently re-

versed from a discourse against power into one organised by it. In fact, according to Stoler, racial thinking has harnessed itself to varied progressive projects to shape social taxonomies that define who is to be excluded from those projects.

Through her analysis of the Dutch colonial regime in the former Dutch East Indies, Stoler shows how racist institutions do not simply serve to define existing distinctions and to legitimate the associated differences in wealth and privilege. Rather, they form the elements of a complex technology of inclusion and exclusion that actually produces, maintains and reproduces such differences. This technology incorporates various lines of distinction – including legally defined categories – that can be arranged and rearranged in varying combinations to legitimate modes of exclusion suited to the normative context of the time and subject to enforcement through interfering regimes of legally defined alliance and policy-steered discipline linked to normative structures such as social work, religion or the family.

Interestingly, Stoler suggests that the dynamics of power that characterised both the colonial societies and their metropolises in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries left behind a ‘sedimented knowledge’ that could serve to manufacture the consent and common sense needed to mediate state power in new ways suited to the current historical context.

Via the sexualised discourse of race, a link could be made between nationalism and desire, creating a key discursive site where subjugated bodies could be made and subjects formed – generating social divisions that are crucial to the exclusionary principles of modern nation-states. (Stoler 1995: 136)

In the final chapter of her book, Stoler suggests that current anti-immigration discourse in Western Europe might form a new episode in this racist ‘defence of the republic’.

### 2.6.1 *Similarities and disjunctions*

Having traced the parallel histories of changing family norms and family migration policies in the Netherlands, my conclusion is that a number of Stoler’s theoretical concepts do in fact help us understand how technologies of inclusion and exclusion have developed and changed in the Netherlands in the course of the latter half of the twentieth century.

Firstly, Stoler’s ideas on how discourses of exclusion link to emancipatory projects help explain why the shifts in the regulation of family migration to the Netherlands took place when they did. Secondly, her ideas on how different techniques of power can interfere with each other to produce new technologies of inclusion and exclusion help clarify

how the Dutch state's capacity to exclude, as expressed through nationality and immigration law, could be amplified at some points, and checked at others. Above all, Stoler's analysis makes us alert to the significance of a legal regime that links the construction and maintenance of citizenship to state involvement in the intimate sphere.

During the imperial order that preceded the Second World War, the legal determination of family status had been combined with the distinguishing marks of gender and generation as well as the disciplinary control of sexuality to draw national lines of distinction and maintain a technology of exclusion still reminiscent of the racist regime of the colonial period. During the nationalist order of the Dutch post-war welfare state, the power to exclude declined. The hierarchies of the previous order were being contested, while protected forms of family life continued to cross-cut territorially defined limits to solidarity. It wasn't until a new consensus had been reached concerning a new revised model of citizenship, defined in terms of individual responsibility, that it once more became possible to draw links. Legal determination of status (in terms of nationality and immigration law) became linked to the distinguishing mark of an individual's labour market participation and, more broadly, to a disciplinary regime, that of integration policies. Together these factors worked to construct – and maintain – a newly effective technology of exclusion. Once more, a social taxonomy (that of the market citizen) had been produced, giving expression to an emancipation project (that of liberal individualism) by defining who was to be excluded from that project – the 'traditional' non-Western migrant. By linking the new pedagogy of individual responsibility to a new family code grounded in the principles of freedom and equality, it once more became possible to channel state power into the intimate sphere to control individual behaviour.

But if illuminating parallels can be drawn between the colonial and the more recent pasts, there are also significant differences. In an era when women have acquired an important degree of sexual autonomy and in which legal, biological and social forms of parentage have become disassociated from each other, the focus of state control has shifted from the sexual act itself to the result of that act: children – their care, upbringing and education. Where under the colonial regime racially impure children figured as the main threat to the integrity of the Dutch empire, the current threat to the Dutch nation takes the shape of culturally deviant offspring: delinquents and radicals who pull down the market value of global cities and business locations on offer in the Netherlands.

In the first years following the Second World War, Dutch citizenship still stood for a privileged claim to belonging, favouring male heads of families with a genealogy that, traced through the male line, was rooted in Dutch territory. During the 1970s and early 1980s, the scope of Dutch

citizenship expanded. But at the same time, the rights accrued to Dutch citizenship were changing. Once a birthright, by the end of the twentieth century the claim to domicile in the Netherlands was becoming an object of international competition, and Dutch citizenship a license to compete.

While the manipulation of anxiety has once more become a key factor of state power, the anxieties in play now are not identical to those of the colonial past. The ambiguities and tensions inherent in the racist regime of the Dutch East Indies reflected and formed an expression of the then prevalent perception of affiliation as an unstable compound of biological reproduction, sexual behaviour and legal status. In the current context of formal gender equality, sexual freedom and de-institutionalised family relations, territory – rather than sexuality – seems to be emerging as a focus of anxieties related to identity and modes of belonging.

## Notes

- 1 'Wet Inburgering Buitenland (*Staatsblad* 2006, nos. 26 & 75). This legislation became effective as of 15 March 2006.'
- 2 Tweede Kamer (2004-2005, 29 700, no. 6: 47-48).
- 3 *Minderhedennota* (Tweede Kamer 1982-1983, 16 102, no. 21).
- 4 Attempts to limit second-generation immigrants' rights – for example, the right to bring over a foreign spouse – were met with strong resistance on the grounds of being discriminatory (Tweede Kamer 1983-1984, 17 984, no. 3; see also Tinnemans 1994).
- 5 On changes in nationality law, see *Nationaliteitswetgeving* (Schuurman & Jordens 209, 7th edition, part B: 110-111), HR (13 October 1995) and RvdW (1995: 204). On immigration law, see Van Walsum (2003).
- 6 The only significant remaining advantages enjoyed by Dutch citizens was that their spouses could apply for naturalisation after a shorter period of residence than other immigrants, and that objections concerning public safety weighed less heavily against their spouses' admission than faced by foreign immigrants. By 2003, the latter distinction was eliminated (De Hart 2003b).
- 7 Tweede Kamer (2001-2002, 26 738, no. 98).
- 8 'For example, possessing a long-term visa acquired in the country of origin became mandatory for family migrants originating from less industrially developed nations in Asia, Africa and South America (*Staatsblad* 1998: 497); family migrants appealing a negative decision on their applications lost access to certain provisions of the Dutch welfare state under the law of the Koppelingswet (*Staatsblad* 1998: 203); family migrants originating from Ghana, Nigeria, India, Pakistan and the Dominican Republic were subjected to strict, lengthy controls of the substantive verity of their official documents (see Boeles 2003).'
- 9 Criminaliteitspreventie in Relatie tot Etnische Minderheden (Tweede Kamer 1997-1998, 25 726, no. 1).
- 10 'Wet Inburgering Nieuwkomers (*Staatsblad* 1998: 261).'

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## 3 Marriages, arranged and forced: The UK debate

*Ralph Grillo*

### 3.1 Introduction

Arranged and forced marriages among immigrant and minority ethnic groups have been widely debated across Europe,<sup>1</sup> and although the present chapter deals principally with developments in the United Kingdom between 1997 and 2009, it has wider theoretical implications. First, it builds on research reported elsewhere (Grillo 2008) in which the family is seen as a moral order, a social construct entailing beliefs, values and ideas by reference to which its members are identified, organised and bound together, though with widely diverse understandings cross-culturally of how familial relations should be defined and practiced. As such, under conditions of migration, it becomes a site of debate about who may, or should, do what, where and when (get married, have children, raise them in a certain way), and thus a powerful kaleidoscope through which to examine the tensions in multicultural societies. Secondly, the chapter contributes to an account of contemporary multiculturalism as a 'negotiated order', albeit one in which negotiations are in danger of breaking down.

In the UK, from 1960 to 2000, policy sought to control and regulate immigration while accepting that most immigrants were there to stay. There was increasing recognition of the legitimacy of cultural difference and willingness to allow the expression of such difference, within certain limits, in the private sphere and, to some degree, also in the public sphere. After the turn of the millennium, however, there was a backlash against this form of multiculturalism (Grillo 2009). Minority ethnic separatism ('parallel lives' in the 'Cantle Report' 2001), along with the persistence of 'traditional' practices, were deemed unacceptable for a society espousing liberal, democratic, individualistic, secular values. In this context, the family became a site of contestation around cultural and social differences, and policies intended to address them.<sup>2</sup>

A site of contestation is a 'terrain, a dynamic linguistic and, above all, semantic space in which social meanings are produced or challenged' (Seidel 1985: 44). A closely interconnected set of institutions, discourses and practices became a battleground between social and cultural forces engaged in a struggle over rights and duties. In the case of the family, this battleground may be observed in many different social and institutional

locations: speeches by politicians and religious leaders, policy statements, the media, academic writing, internet discussion groups and everyday conversations.<sup>3</sup> There is a multiplicity of 'external' and 'internal' discourses and narratives, with an important transnational dimension, and intersection with other debates, for example, over religion. 'External' refers to public policy perspectives addressing the real or imagined social and cultural practices of immigrant and minority ethnic communities, and how those appear to fit (or not) with the hegemonic (real or imagined) practices of the receiving society. 'Internal' includes what happens 'inside' minority ethnic and immigrant families, and the communities claiming their allegiance, their 'cultural debates' (Parkin 1978). But voices are not equal when it comes to representing alternative perspectives within the institutional system where policies are formulated and implemented.

### 3.2 Families

In the UK, public discussion of the family is characterised by chronic moral panics about divorce, teenage pregnancies, youthful antisocial behaviour, the abuse of children, the right to life and same-sex partnerships. For several reasons, immigrant and minority ethnic families are thought especially or distinctively problematic, even if they are not alone. They are deemed instrumental in the evasion of immigration controls: family reunification policies have long provided a legitimate route to entry to Europe, but there is a widespread belief that this is used illicitly, especially with transcontinental arranged marriages, seen as 'sham' marriages of convenience (Knights 2007; Wray 2006; Kofman, Kraler, Kohli & Schmoll, Fleischer and Riaño this volume). Immigrant families are, moreover, thought to impose an unacceptable burden on the health system, flood the schools with children incapable of speaking the local language, and demand priority for housing. They are, further, suspected of a key role in the 'failure' to integrate, creating enclaves in which children are socialised in separate languages and values, orienting them to other worlds (Zubaida 2007). Finally, they are seen as the institution par excellence within which 'difference' is produced and sustained, though also wherein it can be challenged.

Two contrasting examples illustrate how the moral order of the minority ethnic family is believed at odds with that embodied by the supposed 'European' family. In the UK, people of African Caribbean origin are seen (stereotypically) as coming from communities characterised by absent fathers, academic failure, out-of-control children, drugs and gun crime; in other words, where there is *too little family*. Prominent in inner-city disturbances in 1981 (McGhee 2005), such stereotypes have continuing resonance. 'The parents of Afro-Caribbean boys must take more respon-



sibility for their education', said a teachers' union at their annual conference (*The Times* 9 April 2007), and a House of Commons Home Affairs Committee report (2007: 38) commented:

Young people and practitioners we spoke to made a link between the absence of a positive male role model in the home and involvement in gangs or other youth affiliations which commit crime: 'These young men are crying out for fathers... They are looking for that affirmation, they are looking for that identity; they are looking for that role model. They do not find it in the home.'

Asian families, on the other hand, are accused of having *too much family*, frequently seen as too close-knit, placing excessive emphasis on parental – specifically paternal/patriarchal – control, and as crucial instruments in female oppression (Ansari 2004; Enright 2009; Van Walsum on the Netherlands and Riaño on Switzerland this volume). There is, nonetheless, a degree of ambivalence about this (believed) commitment to family values. If it is a cornerstone of separate lives and an obstacle to integration, it is also praiseworthy in the light of the prevailing moral disorder. Thus David Cameron, then Conservative opposition leader, praised 'Asian families and communities' as 'incredibly strong and cohesive [with] a sense of civic responsibility which puts the rest of us to shame' (Cameron 2007). This is not just an outsider's view, as a glance at websites devoted to the Asian or Muslim family shows. Thus, IslamOnline advises:

Family is the bedrock, cradle of human civilisation. It is the foundation and basis of Muslim society ... The Islamic family system brings the rights of the husband, wife, children, and relatives into a fine equilibrium. It nourishes unselfish behavior, generosity, and love within the framework of a well-organized family system. The peace and security offered by a stable family unit is greatly valued by Islam, and it is seen as essential for the spiritual growth of its members. A harmonious social order is created by the existence of extended families and by treasuring children.<sup>4</sup>

A perception common among (male, British) Muslims is that the close-knit family is a 'source of emotional strength and a haven of spiritual and moral safety from the perceived assault of British society and its unwelcome values' (Ansari 2004: 253), and the 'traditional idealized' Muslim family (Husain & O'Brien 2000) grounded in sharia principles and bound by notions of honour is contrasted with the dysfunctional white British family.

These views, revealing elements of both 'Orientalism' and 'Occidentalism', are not completely misleading. Roger Ballard (2008: 49–50), a British

anthropologist and an expert on South Asia, points out that 'the vast majority of non-European settlers continue to operate within the context of ideologies which bind them into all-consuming networks of mutual reciprocity with a [wide] range of kinsfolk'. 'Marriage', he adds:

is a crucial component of the kinship system, but it is set within, and to a large extent overshadowed by a much wider network of inter- and intra-generational ties of mutual reciprocity, largely ordered within the priority given to ties of patrilineal descent.

### 3.3 Marriages arranged and forced

'Arranged marriages,' says Manzoor (2007b), 'have long epitomised to the rest of society all that is alien about Asian culture.' Such marriages are found in many parts of the world (sub-Saharan Africa, the British Royal Family), but several objections are voiced against those contracted by immigrant and minority ethnic populations. Two were mentioned above: that arranged marriages – specifically, transcontinental arranged marriages – are used to evade immigration controls; and that they contribute to parallel lives. A third relates to the moral order and relational system that they exemplify (Wray 2006), for they are believed to contravene the Western ideal of freedom of choice and impose patriarchal authority on young people, especially women.

There is frequent slippage between 'arranged' and much more contentious 'forced' marriages, as is apparent from a remark by former Dutch MP and anti-Muslim activist Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Young Muslim women, she says, including those brought up in Europe, 'are either married off or are subjected to great pressure from the family, which forces them into an arranged marriage ... I would call this a matter of arranged rape' (Hirsi Ali in Snel & Stock 2008). Yet although there continues to be some hostility towards arranged marriages, *per se*, with an assumed equation of arranged and forced, a series of official reports in Britain has since the start of the millennium sought to draw a firm distinction between them (Uddin 2006: 212).

In 1999, following a widely publicised case (Briggs & Briggs 1997), Ann Cryer, the MP who represents a constituency with a significant minority ethnic population, inaugurated a debate in the House of Commons on 'the treatment of Asian Muslim women by their families' (Hansard 10 Feb 1999: column 256) in which she focused on forced marriages. Subsequently, to examine the question, the government established a working group,<sup>5</sup> all the members of which had a minority ethnic background (see Table 3.2); given their prominence in public affairs, they might be described as representing the minority ethnic establishment.

**Table 3.1** *Composition of the forced marriage working group*

Lord Ahmed of Rotherham	Co-chair
Baroness Uddin of Bethnal Green	Co-chair
Lord Dholakia	Chair of the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, member of Home Secretary's Race Relations Forum
Tasmin Arshad-Brown	Author, journalist, member of Home Secretary's Race Relations Forum
Surinder Singh Attariwala	Education and language consultant
Thomas Chan	Member of Metropolitan Police Committee and Home Secretary's Race Relations Forum, deputy chairman of the Chinese in Britain Forum
Humera Khan	Consultant to the An-Nisa Society Muslim women's organisation
Rita Patel	Chair of the 1990 trust, director of the Belgrave Baheno women's organisation
Hannana Siddiqui	Joint coordinator of Southall Black Sisters

Source: Home Office (2000: 28)

Their report 'A choice by right' (Home Office 2000), was highly influential, elaborating a set of principles guiding official response and action, and providing an authoritative discourse (see, inter alia, Phillips & Dustin 2004: 534ff). Its basic arguments became common currency, with key phrases and tropes frequently repeated.

A fundamental conclusion was to insist on distinguishing between arranged and forced marriages, both of which affect men as well as women (Khanum 2008).<sup>6</sup> The difference, it argued, lay in the right to choose, and it was emphasised that the report was 'not about arranged marriage' (Home Office 2000: 10). On the other hand, and quoting a remark from the 1999 Parliamentary debate ('Multi-cultural sensitivity is not an excuse for moral blindness', Hansard 10 February 1999: column 276), the report concluded that although 'In a multi-cultural, multi-faith society like the UK we must value and celebrate our diversity. Equally, we must not excuse practices that compromise or undermine the basic rights accorded to all people'. Thus, they stressed that:

While it is important to have an understanding of the motivations that drive parents to force their children to marry, this does not mean we should accept justifications for denying the right to choose a marriage partner. (Home Office 2000: 14)

The report also drew attention to the way in which 'British Asian communities, led by their women's groups, have been at the forefront of much of the existing action aimed at tackling forced marriage and domestic vi-

olence' (Home Office 2000: 12), adding: 'the issue of forced marriage should not be used to stigmatise any community'.

The ethnic minority composition of the working group did not necessarily reflect a wider positive engagement by all Asian communities with the forced marriage debate. There was substantial criticism from some quarters that members were colluding in an Islamophobic and racist government agenda, restricting the immigration of Asian spouses by defining arranged marriages as forced and simultaneously demonising the cultural practice as a human rights abuse. On the other hand, Hannana Siddiqi of the feminist Southall Black Sisters, an organisation criticising the government's approach from a different direction, resigned over proposals for victims of forced marriages to have access to mediation procedures if they so wished (Home Office 2000: 19). Mediation, she argued, 'undermines agencies, the state, and the protection it has to offer. The solution is weak, not radical; it undermines women' (see also Ghani 2001). The Southall Black Sisters – 'black' being a political rather than an ethnic label – were founded in 1979 to represent minority ethnic women, especially in the context of domestic violence. They have published extensively on forced marriage (e.g. Southall Black Sisters 2002; Siddiqi 2003), being one of many minority organisations active in the campaigns and consultations.<sup>7</sup>

Responding to the recommendations of 'A choice by right', the government established a Community Liaison Unit (subsequently, the Forced Marriage Unit, based in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office) to deal with cases brought to its attention. The unit defines a forced marriage as one where

people are coerced into a marriage against their will and under duress. Duress includes both physical and emotional pressure. Forced marriage is an abuse of human rights and cannot be justified on any religious or cultural basis.<sup>8</sup>

As a preliminary part of the government strategy of engaging with communities to tackle forced marriages from within, the unit commissioned a study (Samad & Eade 2002) to provide a better understanding for officials in the Home Office and elsewhere in government about the socio-cultural underpinning of arranged marriages and an insight into views of, and contexts for, forced marriages as perceived by members of the Asian community. Understanding how forced marriages are perceived was seen as a prerequisite for engaging with the communities. Along with guidelines for social workers, health professionals, teachers and the police, the study was one of several government initiatives aimed at improving the ability of public bodies to confront the sensitive issues arising from forced marriage cases.

In the mid-2000s, the unit was handling some 250 to 300 cases a year, though there are claims that these represent a fraction of the total. A newspaper article, for example, reported that:

a police community officer who works with Asian women in Bradford ... received about 300 requests for help from victims of abuse, abduction or forced marriages last year, twice the total of 1995. Last year 120 women came to him for help after being subjected to violence within the family. A quarter of those were assaulted by relatives other than their partners. He estimates he hears less than 1 per cent of such incidents. (Burke 2000)<sup>9</sup>

The numbers are controversial (Rude-Antoine 2005). As with convenience marriages (Wray 2006), accurate data are unavailable (Samad & Eade 2002), and speculative figures, often from a single source, are frequently recycled in the media and in Parliamentary debates. There is, *inter alia*, a definitional problem; what is under discussion, in what context? Coerced marriage? Spousal abuse? Abduction? Nevertheless, as Samad and Eade (2002: 54) conclude, 'even one instance of forced marriage was one too many', and one must concur.

In 2005 there was a consultation over whether facilitating a forced marriage might be made a criminal offence (Home Office 2005), an idea that had been considered and rejected in the Forced Marriage Unit's first year.<sup>10</sup> Many of those who responded opposed criminalisation (e.g. Muslim Council of Britain 2005; Uddin 2006: 214 lists the arguments; for a comparison of the debate in Britain and France, see also Clark & Richard 2008: 504-507). The government concluded:

While there was no clear majority among respondents about whether or not a specific offence of forcing someone into marriage should be created, the majority felt that the disadvantages of creating new legislation would outweigh the advantages and potentially drive forced marriage underground. (Forced Marriage Unit 2006)

Although welcomed by some, others were dismayed (Norfolk 2006). In November 2006, Liberal Democrat peer and human rights activist Lord Anthony Lester proposed a private members' bill<sup>11</sup> to make forced marriage an offence for which the victim could seek redress through the courts. This became law in 2007 as the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act, which legislates that

where a forced marriage has or is about to take place, courts will be able to make orders to protect the victim or the potential victim and help remove them from that situation. The courts will have a wide

discretion in the type of injunctions they will be able to make to enable them to respond effectively to the individual circumstances of the case and prevent or pre-empt forced marriages from occurring.<sup>12</sup>

**Table 3.2** *Timeline of forced marriage debate in the UK*

1997	Publication of Briggs and Briggs (1997)
1999	House of Commons debate on Asian Muslim women and their families
2000	'A choice by right' report
2000	Foreign and Commonwealth Office/Home Office Joint Action Plan; Creation of Community Liaison Unit (subsequently, Forced Marriage Unit)
2000-2002	Commissioned study Community Perceptions of Forced Marriage
2003-2006	Government consultation rejected idea of criminalisation
2006	Campaign to drive down the number of forced marriages
2006-2007	Lord Anthony Lester's Private Member's Bill to make forced marriage an offence for which the victim could seek redress through the courts becomes Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007
2007	Opposition Conservative Party proposes crackdown on forced marriage EU Daphne conference Active Against Forced Marriage, London, 24-25 October
2008	Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 comes into force Publication of statutory guidelines (Forced Marriage Unit 2008) House of Commons Home Affairs Committee Report Muslim Arbitration Tribunal proposals Marriage visa age raised to 21
2008-present	The debate continues

Nonetheless, in autumn 2007, with the Conservative opposition pressing for tougher action, ministers affirmed that the possibility of criminalising forced marriages remained open and, among a raft of measures, proposed raising the age at which people could enter Britain for marriage from eighteen to 21. The government also initiated a consultation on whether a 'relevant third party' (e.g. a teacher or social worker) could bring an action under the 2007 act (Ministry of Justice 2007; see Clark & Richard 2008; Enright 2009).<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, following a widely publicised inquest into the unlawful killing of a young Asian woman in which the coroner reportedly advised that 'the concept of an arranged marriage was "central" to the circumstances leading up to her death' (The Independent 12 January 2008), the House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee conducted its own investigation, whose detailed two-volume report (2008) set forced marriage in the wider context of domestic violence.

And so the debate extended into 2008 and 2009, becoming entangled on the way with the furore over the Archbishop of Canterbury's speech on sharia (Williams 2008), amid some sensational media stories, yet

further confusion over numbers and more reports, conferences, and interventions by politicians and activists of every stripe.

### 3.4 The other side of the hill: Arranged love

My father treated the concept of love with a withering mixture of contempt and pity. 'What is love, anyway?' he would ask. 'Love is childish. Anyone can fall in love – a 10-year-old can say they are in love – but can you trust a 10-year-old to stay with the same person for 40 years? That is what is wrong with the white people: they put their faith in the heart rather than the head.' (Manzoor 2007a: 187)

[My mother] turned her face from me and with all the contempt she could muster spat out, 'Love!' (Sanghera 2007: 165)

As the previous section intimated, there are several sides to this debate. A substantial ethnographic literature on arranged marriages reveals the complexity of the institution and the range of motives involved, *inter alia*, demonstrating the inadequacy of simplistic contrasts between 'love', 'arranged' and 'forced' matches (An-Na'im 2000; Ansari 2004; Beishon, Modood & Virdee 1998; Enright 2009; Ralston 1997; Werbner 2007). Certainly, arranged marriages are much debated by many people of Asian background born and brought up in Britain, and strenuously opposed by some (Jasvinder Sanghera's 2007 autobiography describes the horrendous failure of her sisters' arranged marriages).<sup>14</sup> 'At present', says Werbner (2007: 167), 'the younger generation, whose parents arrived in Britain in the late 1970s, is reaching marriageable age in large numbers, hence the argument about the pros and cons of arranged marriage both within and beyond the community has intensified considerably'. She adds:

the perception is growing that arranged marriages in Britain based on parental choices no longer 'work'. As children become less willing to accept their parents' judgement, conflicts within the family have multiplied and, in extreme cases, have led to publicity in the local and national press. (Werbner 2007: 168)

Bhopal (1999) illustrates the wide-ranging internal debate for and against arranged marriages, and their role in defining cultural identity, taking place among women in East London.<sup>15</sup> Despite reservations, however, many tolerate them, accept the values that underlie them, and feel obliged to follow their parents' wishes for the sake of the family's good name. Thus, such marriages, she argues, constitute a 'form of social control' (1999: 134). However, many older Asians (female as well as male)

actively prefer marriages that are arranged and endogamous (within ethnic group, religion, caste and, where customary, within lineages, between parallel cousins). There is a widespread belief, certainly among elders, that they are more stable than love matches, reinforcing kinship bonds, cultural norms and identities (Anwar 1998; Modood, Berthoud, Lakey, Nazroo, Smith, Virdee & Beishon 1997; Samad & Eade 2002).

Transcontinental marriages are often preferred for similar reasons (Uddin 2006; Werbner 2007; Kofman, Kraler, Kohli & Schmoll, Suksomboon and especially Riaño this volume). Shaw and Charsley (2006: 411) conclude:

Transnational marriage arrangements involving kin in Pakistan are also motivated by powerful emotional bonds between parents and children. These include the parental desire to secure their children's long-term happiness and reduce the social and emotional risks of marriage, which are perceived to be greater in marriages arranged outside the family than within.

Far from seeking to facilitate the circumvention of immigration laws, matchmakers are concerned to ensure that a potential spouse have no such objective. Indeed, Shaw (2001: 327) observes how some informants felt that they and their daughters had been exploited by relatives in Pakistan who had arranged the marriage principally to allow the husband to gain admission to Britain (see also Charsley 2007). Writing on Turkish families in Belgium, Timmerman (2006: 135) records that 'parents try to protect their daughters from such opportunistic marriages by demanding a substantial dowry' (i.e. *mahr*, transferred to the bride by the prospective husband, Maqsood 2005: 20). Nonetheless, the tendency to arrange marriages transnationally, bringing spouses from 'home', remains strong, albeit possibly declining (Anwar 1998).

In a special issue of *Global Networks*, Charsley and Shaw (2006) dispute the belief that women are passive participants in such marriages. They challenge the view that the matches simply reflect 'corporate interests', as against marriages that are presumed grounded in a 'romantic attachment'. They question the 'unemotional portrayal' of arranged unions, and elsewhere (Shaw & Charsley 2006) reveal, through detailed ethnography, the complexity of motivations for transnational arranged marriages and the simplicity of the 'arranged'/'love' contrast. Instead, they 'highlight the positive sentiment of affection, in relationships between siblings, between parents and children, and also between prospective spouses'. 'Our analysis', they say

offers an important corrective to UK media and policy-interest in the issue of forced marriage and to recent research that highlights



the abuse of the arranged marriage system in transnational contexts. A dominant image of transnational arranged first-cousin marriage is that unsuitable matches are 'forced' upon unwilling young people in response to socio-economic, cultural and psychological pressure by parents from working-class uneducated rural backgrounds. (Shaw & Charsley 2006: 406)

Romance, they conclude is 'compatible with arranged marriage', and 'even though the relationship between husband and wife is not the only or even the main one that motivates marriages between transnational cousins, it is still important' (Shaw & Charsley 2006: 417).

It would seem, then, that 'love', 'arranged' and 'forced' marriages are best seen not as discrete categories, but as points along a spectrum (Samad & Eade 2002: 43). 'In practice', say Shaw and Charsley (2006: 416):

varying degrees of parental or wider family involvement. Cases in which a couple have not met before their wedding day, or else, at the other extreme, have met and married in secret are relatively rare. In many apparently conventionally arranged marriages, the young people may have suggested the marriage or at least influenced the decision that led to the proposal.

Previously, Shaw (2001), discussing what are sometimes called 'arranged love marriages', contrasted matches where parents or guardians take the principal decisions with those where the potential spouses are involved in the choice-making (see also Anwar 1998; Césari, Caeiro & Hussain 2004; Gavron 1996). There are also what have been termed 'traditional cooperative marriages' (Stopes-Roe & Cochrane 1990) where 'either the parent or the candidate can make the selection depending on the circumstances and the eventual decision is a cooperative matter but parental consent is essential' (Samad & Eade 2002: 48). The growing importance of such arrangements may be observed in the increasing use of introduction agencies and the internet (Samad & Eade 2002; see also Anwar 1998; Werbner 2007).

Like Werbner (2007), Timmerman (2006: 135-136) observes further difficulties in distinguishing between arranged and forced marriages: 'A marriage can be seen as "forced" by only one of the partners; or first be considered as "arranged" and later on, once the marriage failed, be evaluated as "forced."' She also reports

a known phenomenon [that] people sometimes prefer to annul their marriage in order to avoid an expensive divorce or financial obligations towards the partner. The procedures of declaring a marriage 'fake' are far less costly than a divorce and exempt the partners from paying eventual alimony. (Timmerman 2006: 135-136)

Thus, one kind of marriage may be turned (retrospectively) into another: “‘love” marriages may be transformed into “arranged love marriages” and presented as if they were conventionally arranged’ (Shaw 2001: 323). There is a kind of elaborate dance (see also Basit 1997), and ‘even if the spouses have in fact chosen each other, the fact they have done so will usually be hidden, so preserving the appearance of the elders’ normative role in doing the choosing’ (Ballard 2006: 6).

### 3.5 Forced marriages: Community perceptions

Samad and Eade’s commissioned study (2002) *Community perceptions of forced marriage* among Bangladeshis in London and Pakistanis in Bradford draws attention to the wide range of opinion across generations. Situating their account within the broader context of economic and social deprivation, and within current thinking about social capital, they argue that poor education and employment among Pakistanis and Bangladeshis ‘leads to greater dependence on bonding social capital which, in turn, reinforces kin networks’ (Samad & Eade 2002: 108). That is, ‘the socio-economic context within which these groups find themselves reinforces group boundaries’ (Samad & Eade 2002: 108), within a cultural tradition that prioritises the welfare of the collectivity (the endogamous kin group) over the individual (see also Ballard 2008). The welfare of the collectivity includes its good name, its honour (izzat). On the evidence they collected, Samad and Eade concluded that

The reasons for forced marriage are complex but the analysis does show that sexuality and independence among young women can trigger off a forced marriage. Women’s behaviour which may jeopardise family honour appears to be an important variable. Family honour motivates men and women to regulate the behaviour of their children, in particular girls, and flagrant disregard of group norms can trigger processes that culminate in forced marriages. (2002: 109; see also Brandon & Salam 2008: 9-26)

Most commonly, forced marriages occur when young people are discovered in a relationship that transgresses group boundaries and affects family honour, thus earning family disapproval; and women as well as men are likely to be instigators (Samad & Eade 2002: 74). A problematic issue is when does persuasion become pressure, and pressure become force (Wikan 2002; Renteln 2004)? ‘A choice by right’ (2000: 11) identified a

spectrum of behaviours behind the term forced marriage, ranging from emotional pressure, exerted by close family members and the

extended family, to the more extreme cases, which can involve threatening behaviour, abduction, imprisonment, physical violence, rape and in some cases murder. People spoke to the Working Group about 'loving manipulation' in the majority of cases, where parents genuinely felt that they were acting in their children and family's best interests.

Drawing on legal precedents,<sup>16</sup> the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 defined force as 'coerc[ing] by threats or other psychological means'. Whether this would include the kind of emotional blackmail reported by Sanghera (2007) or Manzoor (2007a), which might occur in any family ('I'll never be able to raise my head in public again!'), is uncertain. Samad and Eade (2002: 72) point out that although Islam opposes coerced marriages, a point underlined by Baroness Sayeeda Warsi, a Muslim Conservative Party spokeswoman on community cohesion,<sup>17</sup> it is not always clear what counts as coercion: 'While [informants] generally agreed that physical force is unacceptable, psychological and emotional pressure is not considered to be coercion'. The Muslim Arbitration Tribunal (MAT) distinguishes between 'forced' and 'coerced' marriages, the latter entailing emotional, psychological or cultural pressure (MAT 2008: 7-8). One of Samad and Eade's (2002: 71) informants, referring to a daughter who wanted to marry a non-Muslim, defended 'hard counselling ... If you wanna call, to brainwash her mind'.

In public parlance a link is sometimes assumed between arranged and forced marriages and so-called honour killings, in the belief that these constitute a cultural complex that characterises the lives of Pakistani and Bangladeshi or more broadly 'Muslim' or 'Asian' families.<sup>18</sup> As 'A choice by right' said, there is a danger of stigmatising whole communities, and the fear that they are indeed being demonised is reflected in the views of those of Samad and Eade's informants who believed their research was 'part of an Islamophobic/anti-Muslim government policy' (Samad & Eade 2002: 10; see also Wilson 2007). They note:

Immigration control was considered to be the authorities' main aim and the research was seen as a veiled assault on arranged marriages. The government has consistently distinguished between forced and arranged marriages but this distinction has not percolated down to the communities' grass root levels. The historical legacy has been such that it has left a deep suspicion of government by communities which lack influence and are nervous of public interest in this area. (Samad & Eade 2002: III-II2)

Their informants might well have found confirmation in the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee report (2006) that indeed made the

link with immigration control, and recognition of this link lay behind an initiative launched by the Muslim Arbitration Tribunal in 2008.<sup>19</sup> Referring principally to forced marriages between British-based and overseas-based partners, the MAT (2008: 9) proposed a number of measures to deal with what it described as a 'crisis' that has 'loomed within the Muslim community without being noticed or dealt with for the past two decades'. These would involve the British partner making a 'voluntary deposition' to be scrutinised by MAT-appointed judges who would satisfy themselves that the proposed marriage was 'without any force or coercion'. Their declaration could then be used in support of applications for entry to the UK. In the event that the marriage is deemed forced or coerced, the MAT might seek a Forced Marriage Protection Order under the 2007 act (MAT 2008: 15).

### 3.6 Conclusion

What does this controversy say about migrant and minority ethnic families and contemporary multiculturalism?

First, families are moral orders in which reciprocal obligations are central. This moral economy of rights and duties (and how they are negotiated) changes as there are shifts in personal circumstances (within the domestic developmental cycle, for example, or in terms of family members' individual or collective situation), or because changes are happening in the wider society. One source of change, migration, puts a great strain on the moral order, obliging all sides to interpret, or reinterpret, beliefs and practices. This is a common theme of many novels, plays and films by and about minority ethnic communities in the UK and elsewhere.

Secondly, marriage constitutes a site where a clash of cultures (presumed or real) is played out. Hellgren and Hobson (2008: 399) say about debates over 'honour' killings in Sweden that they

bring into stark relief multicultural tensions that are complex and multilayered: between the dominant society's secular values of individualism and between minority groups' cultural and religious values; between parents rooted in other traditions and their children who grow up and live in a society that is one of the most secular in the world, and with a high degree of sexual freedom for men and women.

But there is no Manichean conflict. There is a multiplicity of actors and an interplay between many different voices. The debate about forced marriage has involved, among others, government ministers, MPs and councillors, civil servants, the media, the judiciary, the courts, the police,

social workers, teachers, lawyers, representative religious bodies, prominent members of minority ethnic communities and their associations, minority and majority activist organisations, political parties, minority ethnic men and women of all ages, novelists, playwrights, film-makers and, not least, academics (including anthropologists). In this process certain voices, narratives, facts are privileged, and how and why repays careful attention. There is a complicated story, only hinted at here, in the light of which the question whether marriage practices hinder integration or reinforce 'parallel' lives seems beside the point.

Thirdly, the governance of multicultural societies entails cognisance of the diverse values attached to, or associated with, different cultures and 'communities', but also judgment about what kind of difference, and how much, to recognise, formally and informally, in private and public. In the UK, over the last 40 years this has involved negotiating boundaries, often pragmatically: *hijabs* and turbans, yes, *jilbabs*, *niqabs*, *burqas*, perhaps not; freedom of expression, yes, incitement to religious or racial hatred, no; arranged marriages, perhaps, forced marriages, by no means, but not criminalised. The debate about marriage shows how such boundaries are drawn and a *modus vivendi* reached. In the British case (it may be different elsewhere, e.g. Modood & Ahmad 2007), there is no simple, top-down imposition of hegemonic authority, but an outcome that reflects a complex *rapproches de force* in an emergent multicultural society.

Fourthly, knowing where to draw the line, or accept the line being drawn, is often very difficult, but forced marriages contravene the basic values of liberal democratic societies, with a strong belief in human rights. No 'cultural defence', as it is called, is possible. The great majority among minority populations accept this, while feeling defensive about the practice, and fearing demonisation. How, asks Razack (2004: 16) to 'name and confront violent practices' without 'feeding culture clash'? (see also Phillips & Saharso 2008). As Samad and Eade (2002: 112) argue, policy initiatives should be devised and applied in a 'sophisticated and subtle manner so that they do not provoke a diversionary debate on racism and Islamophobia' (see also Siddiqi in Werbner 2007).

Finally, another difficult question. It is sometimes hard not to sympathise with immigrant and minority ethnic men whose identities as husbands and fathers – their sense of masculinity – is constantly challenged, even denigrated. Samad and Eade's (2002: 109) comment on the elderly who 'appear exasperated by their inability to enforce or impose their decisions of marriage on young men and women' catches something of this. One wonders at the effect on private and public personae. Is it a factor in the attractiveness, for some, of Islamism and perhaps the widely reported hankering for sharia? In the end, such men may simply have to take their medicine, but their concerns should not be swept aside.

## Acknowledgements

Thanks to Roger Ballard, Pia Karlsson Minganti, Marianne Holm Pedersen, Prakash Shah and especially Fauzia Shariff for much advice and help.

## Notes

- 1 On Continental Europe see, *inter alia*, Bartels and Storms (2008), Bredal (2005), Césari, Caeiro and Hussain (2004), Clark and Richard (2008), Hagelund (2008), Rude-Antoine (2005, 2007), Siim and Skjeie (2008), Strobel and Lobermeier (2007), Timmerman (2006) and Wikan (2002). In 2007, the EU launched the Active Against Forced Marriage initiative under the Daphne Programme in order to identify and disseminate best practices; conferences were held in Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Turkey and the UK (Foreign & Commonwealth Office 2007; Felz & Triebel 2007).
- 2 The introduction to this volume and the chapters by Van Walsum and Riaño take up various aspects of these themes.
- 3 This chapter is largely an exercise in the ‘discursive ethnography’ of this contested site. It draws on a corpus of written and spoken materials (including more conventional ethnographic studies) to extract themes that protagonists addressed and observe how they addressed them. Special attention is paid to vocabularies, phrases, tropes and instances used in argument.
- 4 <http://www.islamonline.com/news/newsfull.php?newid=722>.
- 5 The Labour Government of the 1990s proved being sensitive to issues of concern to British Asians, who largely supported the government. One such example is 1997’s legislation to abolish the much-criticised ‘primary purpose’ rule.
- 6 The US Department of State (2005) employs similar language to differentiate between arranged and forced marriages, incidentally citing the same widely quoted statistics (15 per cent of forced marriage victims are male, etc).
- 7 Other organisations include the An-Nisa Society, Apna Gar (Asian Women’s Domestic Violence Project) in East London, the Asian Women’s Resource Centre, the Henna Foundation in Cardiff, Imkaan, Karma Nirvana in Derby, the Muslim Women’s Helpline, the Muslim Women’s Institute and the Muslim Parliament. There are many individual activists, Asian and otherwise. As Dustin and Phillips (2008) point out, minority women’s action groups have long been involved in campaigning on these issues.
- 8 <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1094234857863>.
- 9 See also Khanum (2008). In 2008, the Forced Marriage Unit received approximately 1,600 reports and intervened in 420 cases.
- 10 The criminalisation of forced marriages has been enacted or is under active consideration in various European countries including Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany and Norway.
- 11 A proposal for legislation introduced by an MP, not a member of the government.
- 12 <http://www.justice.gov.uk/news/newsrelease260707c.htm>.
- 13 The proposals were implemented in November 2008.
- 14 Sanghera is a highly influential activist against forced marriages and violence

- against women. In 2009, she received a Pride of Britain award. See <http://www.co-operative.coop/Pride-of-Britain-2009/2009-winners/Special-Recognition--Jasvinder-Sanghera>.
- 15 See also Anwar (1998: 106ff), Basit (1997: 72-78), Bradby (1999: 157ff), Jacobson (1998: 162, 167), Phillipson, Ahmed and Latimer (2003) and Monica Ali's novel *Brick lane* (2003).
  - 16 Poulter (1998: 206-207) shows how 'coercion' and 'duress' have been interpreted in marriage cases, notably *Hirani v. Hirani* [1983] 4 FLR 232. In the case of *NS v. MI* [2006] EWHC 1646 Family Division, the court – employing the test established by *Hirani* – ruled that: 'The threats and pressure to which the petitioner had been subjected over a period of many months were such as to destroy the reality of her consent and to overbear her will'. The judge's comments are cited by Enright (2009: 340). See also Phillips (2003), Phillips and Dustin (2004) and Wilson (2007).
  - 17 <http://conservativehome.blogs.com/torydiary/2007/12/warsi-makes-fir.html>. See also <http://www.myislamweb.com/forum/showthread.php?s=8ec5d52c42e5e619c1af3a5841cc7d1&p=130039#post130039>. Ballard (2006: 6) comments how 'the notion that the spouses themselves (and most especially the bride) should also give her explicit consent is deeply embedded in Punjabi culture'.
  - 18 See Western Resistance (2006). Korteweg and Yurdakul (2009) cite many such examples. See also Enright (2009) and Wilson (2007). The Judicial Studies Board (2005-2008) warns against this conflation.
  - 19 The MAT was created in 2007 'to provide a viable alternative for the Muslim community seeking to resolve disputes in accordance with Islamic Sacred Law and without having to resort to costly and time consuming litigation' (<http://www.matribunal.com>). A video of speeches given at the launch of the MAT forced marriage initiative is available at [http://www.matribunal.com/initiative\\_qa\\_sfs.html](http://www.matribunal.com/initiative_qa_sfs.html).

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## **4 Filial obligations among immigrants and native Dutch: A comparison of perceptions and behaviour among ethnic groups and generations**

*Djamila Schans and Helga de Valk*

### **4.1 Introduction**

Filial obligation, both perceptions and behaviour thereof, are often supposed to differ across ethnic groups. Immigrants from non-Western countries are supposed to originate from, and be part of, family systems that have strong interdependent ties and obligations compared to natives in the host society (Bolzman, Poncioni-Derigo, Vial & Fibbi 2004; Reher 1998). How and to what extent the immigration experience affects perceptions and behaviour regarding filial obligations is still rather unexplored. The literature is contradictory on the importance of ethnic background for filial obligations. Some North American studies show that expectations parents have towards their children indeed differ by ethnic group (Burr & Mutchler 1999; Lee, Peek & Coward 1994; Rosenthal 1986). Other studies, however, point to the fact that inter-ethnic differences are the result of differences in demographic characteristics and socio-economic position between natives and immigrants (Glick & Van Hook 2002; Mitchell, Wister & Gee 2004; Sarkisian, Gerena & Gerstel 2007). Differences in family relations across ethnic groups may thus not be as large as assumed and may be partially explained by socio-economic position (Silverstein & Waite 1993; Schans & Komter 2006). De Valk and Schans (2008) found that older immigrants, especially, have higher filial obligation expectations than their Dutch counterparts, but few studies have examined both perceptions of filial obligation and actual support behaviour, nor has the importance of perceptions for behaviour received much attention yet.

In addition, the available research focuses on North America, and much less is known on how these compare to the European situation. Given the provision of welfare state arrangements in many European societies like the Netherlands, one could assume that perceptions and behaviour regarding care for the elderly are different from those societies in which the state offers only very limited support to families in this respect. The importance of ethnic characteristics for filial obligations may thus vary according to the social context (Baldassar 2008). Getting more advanced insights into the determinants of filial obligations of immigrants and their offspring is also of societal relevance now that a substantial and growing

proportion of the elderly in many Western countries has an immigrant origin. In the Netherlands, for example, the ethnic composition of the population has changed significantly since the 1960s; today, around 10 per cent of the 16.4 million inhabitants of the Netherlands originate from non-Western backgrounds, mostly from labour-exporting countries such as Turkey and Morocco and the former Dutch colonies of Suriname and the Antilles. These demographic developments may have serious implications for care, policy and family relations (Warnes, Friedrich, Kellaher & Torres 2004).

The aims of this chapter are threefold. First of all, we ask whether perceptions and behaviour regarding filial obligations differ between immigrants and the Dutch. Secondly, we explore whether there are differences in perceptions between generations among each of the ethnic groups. Finally, we analyse actual support behaviour in immigrant and Dutch families and question the importance of filial norms for such support. For each of these three research topics we aim to show how immigrant background compares to other socio-demographic features that could be of influence. Our study focuses on the Netherlands and includes Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese, Caribbeans as well as native Dutch.

## **4.2 Theory on filial obligations**

Filial obligations can be interpreted both as attitudes and actual behaviour. In the first sense, it refers to a societal attitude towards the duty of (adult) children to meet the needs of their ageing parents. In the latter way, filial obligations refer to the support provided by adult children to their parents. Rossi and Rossi (1990) defined norms of filial responsibility as culturally defined rights and duties that specify both the ways in which family members are expected to behave towards each other and the obligations to exchange and provide support to one another. It is argued that an individual's expectations of, and attitudes towards, filial obligation develop during socialisation, by personal experiences as well as by observing relationships between family members of different generations (Burr & Mutchler 1999). The provision of support, however, is determined by socio-demographic circumstances as well, and it is as of yet unclear whether ethnic differences in attitudes towards filial obligations can be directly translated into ethnic differences in support behaviour. Findings from previous research are indecisive on this point and seem to depend on the type of support under study. For example, Eggebeen (1992) found that immigrants in the United States were less likely to provide financial support to kin than were Euro-Americans, but found no ethnic differences in the case of emotional and practical support.

Two different points of view regarding the importance of ethnic background for filial obligations are found in the literature. From a cultural perspective, differences in attitudes towards familial norms and family responsibilities are emphasised to explain differences in levels of actual filial support. Theories of 'family systems' suggest that family relations and related expectations reflect the importance attached to kinship in a society. Several authors have argued that in more collectivistic societies kinship ties take centre stage (Todd 1985; Inglehart & Baker 2000; Kagitcibasi 1996; Reher 1998). Kagitcibasi (1996) refers to these societies as 'cultures of relatedness'. It can be assumed that many immigrant older people in the Netherlands were socialised in such kinship-oriented societies, where intergenerational interdependence was a prerequisite for a family's material well-being. Dutch society, on the other hand, as many Western countries, is characterised by individualism and the independence or autonomy of parents and children. According to Kagitcibasi (1996), family relations in the Netherlands exemplify the 'culture of separateness'. In these societies, support is mainly provided by the welfare state.

Alternatively, some studies point to the fact that inter-ethnic differences in filial obligations are not so much cultural differences, but rather the result of differences in demographic characteristics and socio-economic position between natives and immigrants (Glick & Van Hook 2002; Mitchell, Wister & Gee 2004). This second point of view suggests that not only is difference between groups of importance, but also within groups. Acculturation theories, furthermore, suggest that over time immigrants adjust their perceptions and orientations to the cultural patterns of the country of residence (Alba & Nee 1997). This does not imply that norms and values from the country of origin are totally abandoned, but rather that the immigration experience prompts their revision (Kagitcibasi 1996). Living in the host society for a longer period of time or being born in the host society increases exposure to new values. This line of reasoning would lead to expectations of larger generational differences in the importance attached to filial obligation among immigrant families than is the case for natives.

### **4.3 Immigrant groups in the Netherlands**

Large-scale immigration to the Netherlands started in the 1960s and, since then, there have been distinct successive flows. The earliest immigrants came from former Dutch colonies, like Surinam and the Antilles in the Caribbean. Due to the colonial ties, many Surinamese and Antillean immigrants were familiar with Dutch society and had some command of the language (Vermeulen & Penninx 2000).

The second large flow, as in many other Western European countries, was of predominantly unskilled, male labour immigrants from Southern

Europe and the Mediterranean, particularly Turkey and Morocco. Many of them had their families; wives and children, come to the Netherlands during the 1980s and 1990s. Today, first-generation Turkish and Moroccan immigrants have a low socio-economic status in the Netherlands. Due to economic recession and disability resulting from the physical work they performed, many became dependent on state benefits. The second generation is much more diversified, but even among second-generation Turks and Moroccans, unemployment and state dependency is much higher than among native Dutch. The Surinamese and Antillean socio-economic position is very diverse, though generally lies between the position of the native Dutch, on the one hand, and that of the Turks and Moroccans, on the other. All groups brought with them their own cultural and demographic features (De Valk & Liefbroer 2007). Turkish and Moroccan societies are predominantly Islamic, patrilineally organised and segregated by gender. Strong interdependent relations between family members exist that are prescribed by social norms. The Surinamese and Antillean Caribbean family system, in contrast to the Turkish and Moroccan family system, is often described as matrifocal with a relative absence of cultural norms that promote marriage and tolerance of non-marital childbearing. It is not unusual for households to be headed by women with male partners only occasionally, if ever, present.

## 4.4 Hypotheses

Based on the literature and theoretical notions we formulate six hypotheses.

### 4.4.1 *Ethnic background and perceptions*

Based on theories of different family systems (Todd 1985; Inglehart & Baker 2000; Kagitcibasi 1996; Reher 1998), immigrants in the Netherlands are expected to have grown up in more traditional group-oriented societies. Even though immigrant children are raised in the Netherlands, parental socialisation into ethnic specific behaviour is of importance for the perceptions and behaviour of children. This is especially the case for those issues that relate to the private sphere of life (De Valk & Liefbroer 2007). Contrary to societies from which many immigrants originate, Dutch society is generally characterised by individualisation and the independence of parents and children. We therefore hypothesise that immigrants will be more often of the opinion that children should support their parents than is the case for Dutch ( $H_1$ ).

According to acculturation theories, immigrants will focus their perceptions and behaviour on their country of residence. This is particularly the case for immigrant children who are born or largely raised in the re-



ceiving society. A person's age can be a proxy for the norms in society at a certain point in time. Given the development of the welfare state, we can assume that over time and generations, attitudes towards support of the elderly have changed. Whereas the older generation still sees the necessity of support provided by children, this might be much less the case for the younger generations. Although the effects of generational shift may be universal, it could be even larger for immigrant families; many of the older immigrants born and raised in the countries of origin may still be attached to the cultural norms they were socialised in. The younger generation of immigrants, however, is more likely to have been raised in the Netherlands and their perceptions may thus be more similar to the Dutch. Based on these notions, we expect that older generations of immigrants will be more of the opinion that children should support their parents than younger generations of migrants ( $H_2$ ).

#### 4.4.2 *Support behaviour*

In the absence of direct measures of behaviour, studies generally assume that stronger cultural preferences for filial obligations among immigrants translate directly into higher levels of support behaviour. Nevertheless, empirical results studying familial support from a structural framework to understand familial support are mixed. Some insist that immigrant families rely even more on family support precisely because of their lower socio-economic backgrounds (Stack 1974; Scott & Black 1999). Other studies focusing on the structural position of immigrant families, however, found that resource constraints prevent immigrants from participating in family networks, and that lower income and educations reduces the likelihood of support (Roschelle 1997; Silverstein & Waite 1993; Hogan, Eggebeen & Clogg 1993). Especially in the case where welfare state arrangements are available and affordable for everyone, the direct necessity of providing help to parents may be less.

Studies are thus indecisive concerning the effects of ethnic background and socio-economic position on support behaviour. In this study, we test two contrasting hypotheses against each other. First of all, we hypothesise that the culturally specific preference for strong intergenerational ties will continue to exert an influence on actual intergenerational support behaviour. Immigrant children are thus expected to support their parents more than Dutch children, not taking into account socio-economic standing ( $H_3'$ ). As discussed previously, however, lower socio-economic standing could also prevent adult children from supporting their parents. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is that although preferences for filial obligations might be stronger among immigrant groups, actual support is not higher due to limited resources ( $H_3''$ ).

In order to disentangle possible cultural differences between ethnic

groups, a direct measure of parental support expectations is studied. The study by Silverstein, Gans and Yang (2006) showed that norms held by children stimulate supportive behaviour. They conclude that the family continues to have an essential function in providing support and care between generations. This suggests that existing norms within the family may determine the actual support provided. We thus hypothesise that parents who have higher support expectations receive more support from their children than those with fewer expectations (H4).

Various studies also point to the importance of the strength of family ties for support behaviour and show, for example, that a higher quality of relationship between parents and adult children is positively related to the exchange of support (Rossi & Rossi 1990; Roschelle 1997). Although it is difficult to determine the direction of causality between the two, it is clear that having a good relationship between parent and child coincides with more exchange and support between the generations. We hypothesise that parents who have good relationships with their adult children will receive more support from them than parents who do not have good relationships with their children (H5).

Finally, research suggests that family as well as parent-child characteristics are important for providing help. Three socio-demographic features are often related to opinions and perceptions regarding the family (Kalmijn 2004; Roschelle 1997; Rossi & Rossi 1990; Spitze & Logan 1990). First of all, younger people are likely to provide less support than older people. Secondly, mothers are more likely to receive help than fathers (Laditka & Laditka 2001; Rossi & Rossi 1990). Third, the need for parental help (indicated by their age, marital status and psychical well-being) may influence the help that children give (Gierveld 2003) (H6).

In the analyses we test these hypotheses after controlling for parents' level of education, their number of children and the presence of co-residing children.

## 4.5 Data

Data from the first round of the 'Netherlands kinship panel study' (NKPS) (Dykstra, Kalmijn, Knijn, Komter, Liefbroer & Mulder 2004) are used. We include the main sample (Dutch respondents) and immigrant samples (including Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and Antillean respondents). The main sample is nationally representative and includes 8,000 Dutch respondents. The immigrant sample was drawn from thirteen Dutch cities in which 50 per cent of the immigrants from the four main ethnic groups live. It includes 1,400 immigrants of Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese or Antillean origin. Topics covered in the main and the immigrant questionnaires were similar, and provide comparable data. The respondents were

interviewed in their homes, in most cases by an interviewer of the same ethnic background. All interviews followed a structured questionnaire in Dutch that was available in Turkish and Arabic as well. The response rate among the immigrants was in the same range as that of the Dutch, from 41 per cent for the Surinamese to 52 per cent for the Turks.

In our study immigrants are compared with Dutch respondents living in the thirteen cities in which the immigrants were sampled. For the analyses of perceptions, all respondents aged 18-80 are included ( $N=3,200$ ). The study of behaviour is limited to those respondents who have at least one child aged fifteen or over. Dyad data of parents and child from one family are included. This selection results in a sample of 132 Turkish, 103 Moroccan, 192 Surinamese, 105 Antillean and 551 Dutch families.

## 4.6 Measures

### 4.6.1 *Dependent variables*

#### *Filial obligation norms*

The first part of the analyses focuses on three variables related to norms of filial obligation of children towards parents. Respondents were asked on a five-point Likert scale whether they agreed with the statement that 'children who live nearby should visit their parents at least once a week', 'children should care for their sick parents' and 'if parents are old, children should provide co-residence for them'. Answer categories ranged from 1) fully agree (group-oriented) to 5) fully disagree (individualistically oriented). We studied differences between each of the five ethnic groups as well as between the generations of respondents in each of the groups.

#### *Actual support behaviour*

In the second part we study *actual support behaviour* by children as reported by the parent for up to two randomly selected children. We use two items that relate to practical help provided to parents in the past three months, namely: 1) help in household and 2) help with chores in and around the house, lending things, transportation and moving. In addition, two items on emotional support provided by children, advice given to parents and interest shown in parents' lives are analysed. Response categories were 1) not at all, 2) once or twice and 3) several times. The four dependent variables in the multivariate analyses are scales of the relative level of help constructed by adding the help received from each of the two selected children divided by the valid number of reports for these children. This results in a scale ranging from 1) no help received from either child to 3) received help from both children several times.

#### 4.6.2 *Independent variables*

##### *Immigrant group*

The ethnic background of the respondents was defined according to their own and their parents' country of birth. Those born abroad or with at least one parent born abroad were assigned to one of the four immigrant groups.

##### *Educational level of the parent*

The educational level of the respondent was measured as the highest educational level to which the respondent had been enrolled (with or without completion or accreditation). Three levels were distinguished, from low '1' to high '3'.

##### *Marital status of the parent*

Respondents who were married at the time of the interview (coded '1') were compared with those who were divorced, widowed or never married (coded '0').

##### *Parents' number of children*

The number of surviving children (up to a maximum of seven) are included as a continuous variable.

##### *Co-residence of children*

A dummy variable indicating whether the parent had any co-residential children at the time of the interview was included. Those without co-residential children are the reference category.

##### *General health assessment of the parent*

Respondents were asked to rate their current health condition on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1) very good to 5) very poor.

##### *Age of the parent*

This is a continuous variable of the age of the parent at the time of the interview.

##### *Gender of the parent*

This is a dichotomous variable in which men are the reference category (women coded '1').

##### *Relationship quality of parent and child*

The parent-child relationship quality was determined based on the overall report of the parent indicated on a four-point Likert scale from 1) not so good to 4) very good. The reported quality of the relationship for each of

the two children indicated a very high correlation of 0.82. Therefore we can assume that the reported relationship quality for one child is indicative for relations within the family. We thus include the reported quality for one child only.

#### *Support expectations of the parent*

A support expectations scale was constructed based on the agreement with three items on filial obligation of children towards parents, namely: 'children who live nearby should visit their parents at least once a week', 'children should care for their sick parents' and 'if parents are old, children should provide co-residence for them'. The scale has an overall good reliability with alpha 0.73. Answers on each of the items were summed and divided by the number of valid answers resulting in a scale from 1) expecting much (group-oriented) to 5) expecting less (individualistically oriented) support from children.

#### *Gender of the child*

A dichotomous variable indicated whether at least one daughter was among the selected children for which provided help was reported. No daughters are the reference category.

#### *Age group*

For the first part of the analyses on generational differences in perceptions, the age of the respondent in years, at the time of the interview, has been recoded into three age groups: 1) 18-30, 2) 31-50 and 3) 51+.

## **4.7 Analyses**

Descriptive analyses on perceptions and behaviour are provided by ethnic group. Differences in mean group opinions are tested using post hoc multi-group comparisons – least significant difference (LSD). In the first part that focuses on differences in perceptions between generations, differences between age groups are studied. In the second part, ordinary least squares (OLS) regression is used to study the effect of support expectations, ethnic and socio-demographic characteristics on the received support by parents.

## 4.8 Results

### 4.8.1 *Perceptions of filial obligations: an impression*

The socio-demographic profiles of the respondents are presented in Table 4.1 and Figures 4.1-4.3 show the level of agreement with the three statements of filial obligations. It is clear that around half of the Turkish and Moroccan respondents agreed with the statement that children who live nearby should visit their parents at least once a week, that 36 per cent of the Surinamese agreed with this statement, as did 16 per cent of the Antilleans and the Dutch. By contrast, around 4 per cent of Turks and Moroccans did not agree with the statement, against 26 per cent of the Dutch. Testing differences between the ethnic groups using a post hoc LSD comparison (not in the table) shows that the opinions of Turks and Moroccans differ significantly from each other. All other groups differ significantly from each other as well as from the Turkish and Moroccan respondents.

When respondents were asked 'when parents are old, children should provide co-residence for them', ethnic differences became even more pronounced. No less than 84 per cent of the Moroccans agree/strongly agree with this statement, against only 11 per cent of the Dutch. Turks, Surinamese and Antilleans (in descending order) hold a middle position, but clearly are more of the opinion that children should provide co-residence to their parents than the are Dutch. The results of the LSD post hoc test (not in the table) confirm that there are significant differences between each of the five ethnic groups.

Finally, around 40 per cent of Dutch respondents agree/strongly agree that adult children should take care of their parents if they become sick. Again, all immigrant groups agree/strongly agree with this statement more often, with 65 per cent of the Antilleans and up to 90 per cent of the Moroccans thinking this is a child's duty. Our test for group differences (not in table) revealed that the Surinamese and Antilleans did not differ from each other, though their opinion differed from all other groups. Overall, these bivariate comparisons indicate that the Dutch agreed least with all statements, and their views differ from each of the immigrant groups.

Moreover, we examined differences within ethnic groups, using three different age categories (18-30, 31-50 and 51+) to test our hypothesis (H2) that younger generations of immigrants – who most likely are more acculturated to Dutch society – will agree less with strong filial obligations. Our results show, however, that no such generational differences are found. In the Turkish, Moroccan and Surinamese groups no significant generational differences are found for any of our dependent variables. Only for the Antillean group, we see that the older generations agree more

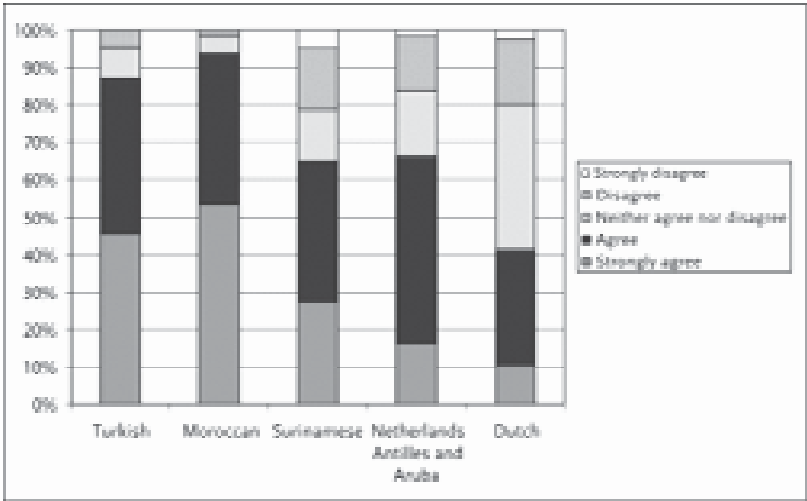
with the statement that ‘children should take care of their parents if they are sick’, but no generational differences are found for the other statements. Surprisingly, most generational differences are found for the Dutch. Younger Dutch respondents agree significantly more with the statements that children should take care of their sick parents and should provide co-residence for their elderly parents than do elderly Dutch respondents. On the other hand, older Dutch respondents agree more strongly with the statement that children should visit their parents at least once a week than do younger respondents.

**Table 4.1** *Description of background characteristics as included in the regression analyses, by ethnic group*

Independent variables	Range	Turks	Moroccans	Surinamese	Antilleans	Dutch
Age of parent	31-79	47.7	51.1	50.9	49.6	58.9
Gender of the parent (reference men)	0/1	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.6
Marital status of parent (reference not married)	0/1	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.6
General health assessment of parent (1 = good/5 = poor)	1-5	2.8	2.9	2.4	2.3	2.2
Educational level of parent (1 = low/3 = high)	1-3	1.2	1.2	1.8	1.7	1.9
Number of children	1-7	3.4	5.0	3.0	3.0	2.4
Gender of children (reference no daughters)	0/1	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Co-residence of children (reference no co-residential child)	0/1	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.3
Relationship quality (1 = not good/4 = very good)	1-4	3.6	3.5	3.6	3.3	3.4
Support expectations (1 = high/5 = low)	1-5	1.8	1.6	2.4	2.5	3.1
N		132	103	190	106	551

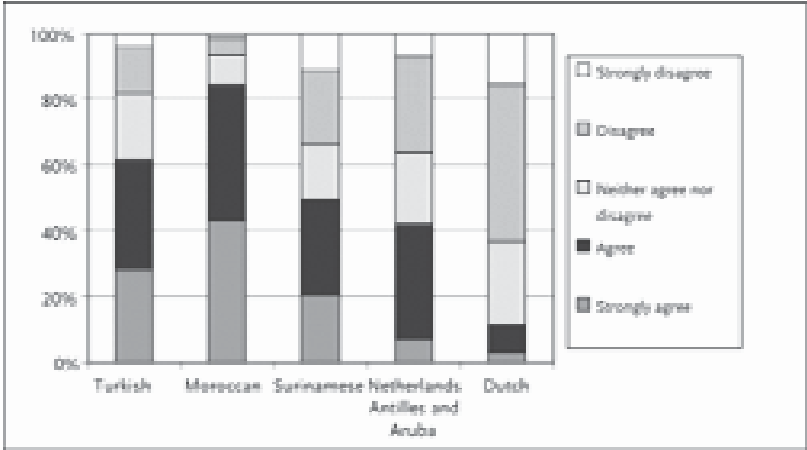
Source: NKPS 2002-2003 (main and migrant sample)

Figure 4.1 *Level of agreement with statement that ‘Children should look after sick parents’*



Source: NKPS (2002-2003, main and migrant sample)

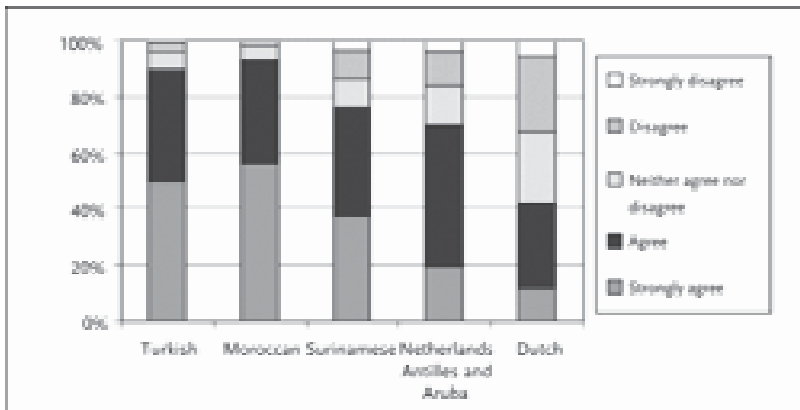
Figure 4.2 *Level of agreement with statement ‘Parents should live with children in old age’*



Source: NKPS 2002-2003 (main and migrant sample)



**Figure 4.3** *Level of agreement with statement 'Children should visit parents at least once a week'*



Source: NKPS (2002-2003, main and migrant sample)

#### 4.8.2 Actual support

Table 4.2 (in annex p. 118) provides insight into the support provided to parents as reported for one randomly selected child. Although our data include information on two randomly selected children, we limit the description to one child because similar patterns are found for the second child selected. It is clear that the Dutch most often do not receive any help in household chores from their children. Around half of the immigrant parents report receiving such assistance from their children, with Moroccans answering affirmatively most often. When we turn to other practical support, the majority of Dutch, but also Antilleans, do not receive such support (60 and 64 per cent, respectively). In the other groups, a small majority does indicate that they have received practical support from their children at least once or twice in the past three months.

A different picture emerges when we look at emotional support. An overwhelming majority, at almost 93 per cent, of Dutch parents report that their children showed interest in their lives during the past three months. Of these, 74 per cent showed interest several times. Although a similar pattern is found among the Surinamese, for the other groups, a larger percentage of parents report experiencing no interest at all (25 per cent of the Antilleans, 20 per cent of the Turks and 18 per cent of the Moroccans). Finally, when receiving advice is examined, Surinamese parents, in particular, are found to receive advice from their children several times; 52 per cent, where other percentages are substantially lower; between 24 and 30 per cent for all other ethnic groups. Nevertheless,

at least half of all parents in all ethnic groups get advice from their children at least once or twice (between 56 per cent for Antilleans and 78 per cent for Surinamese).

Table 4.3. (in annex) shows the mean level of support received by parents. Differences between each ethnic group are tested by using post hoc comparison. Comparing support behaviour between the groups, ethnic differences are less straightforward than they were for attitudes towards filial obligations. Unlike filial norms, we do not find a clear dichotomy between the immigrant groups and the Dutch for behaviour. For help with household chores, LSD post hoc comparisons indicate that the Dutch can be differentiated from all the immigrant groups, but the immigrant groups do not differ from each other. Also for practical support, the Dutch get less than any of the immigrant groups except the Antilleans. Surinamese and Moroccans do not differ from each other, nor do the Turkish and the Antilleans.

Moreover, when emotional support is considered, the Dutch do not differentiate from either the Surinamese or the Moroccans, but have a significantly higher score than the Turks and Antilleans. Turkish parents are found to report receiving the least emotional support from children compared to all the other groups. Finally, when we look at giving advice, it is the Surinamese who get more advice from children than all other ethnic groups. The other groups do not differ significantly from one another. These descriptive results seem to indicate that when we examine support behaviour, ethnic differences disappear based on the specific type of support under study.

In order to determine the role of ethnic origin, filial norms and socio-demographic characteristics, we conducted an OLS regression analyses on each of the four independent variables of support. Results are presented in Table 4.4 (in annex). The multivariate findings on ethnic differences partially support our bivariate findings. Our results show that differences between immigrants and the Dutch remain strongest for help with household chores. Immigrant parents receive more household help than Dutch parents even when background characteristics are controlled for (first column, Table 4.4). We also find that mothers report receiving more help than fathers. Having co-residing children and a good relationship with one's children also increases the likelihood of getting help in the household, whereas having more children reduces receiving this type of help. We do not find any effects of age, marital status, health status or educational level of the parent. Adding support expectations of parents, as a direct control for the effect of cultural preferences, initially indicates that those who expect more receive more. Including interaction effects of support expectations and ethnic origin (model 2, Table 4.4), however, reveals that no effect of support expectations is found except for the Turkish: for this group we find that those who expect more help from children indeed get more help in the household.

Regarding practical help, only Surinamese parents report getting this more often than the other ethnic groups. Being a woman, having co-residing children and enjoying a good relationship with one's children is again related to receiving more practical support, whereas having more children means getting less help with odd jobs. The health condition of the parent relates to getting help: those who are in a poor condition report receiving more help than those who are well. Support expectations are found to be unrelated to getting help with odd jobs among all groups.

Turning to emotional support, by showing interest in the personal life of the parent we find that Turkish and Antillean parents receive significantly less interest than is the case for parents in any of the other ethnic groups. At the same time, our analyses show that receiving interest in the personal life is unrelated to any of the studied background characteristics of parent and child except the relationship quality. Again, having a better relationship with your children is related to experiencing more interest. Once more, no effects are found for filial norms; when testing for interaction effects, we also do not find any relationship between parents' expectations of support and reported interest shown by their children.

Finally, we studied the advice received by parents (last two columns, Table 3.4). Surinamese parents receive more advice compared to Dutch parents, but the other ethnic groups do not differ from the Dutch in this respect. Mothers receive more advice from their children than do fathers, which is also the case for those in poor health condition. In line with the previous findings, the results show that having a good relationship with your children is tied to getting more advice. None of the other characteristics of parent or child are related to receiving advice. Regarding support expectations, our analyses show an effect among Surinamese only. For the latter group, we find that having more support expectations of children is related to getting more advice from children.

## 4.9 Conclusion

In this chapter we go beyond existing research by studying not only perceptions of filial obligations, but also actual support behaviour between parents and adult children among five different ethnic groups in the Netherlands. The main aim was to determine the importance ethnic origin has for expectations on filial obligations and support behaviour and how this factor compares to filial norms and socio-demographic background.

Our findings show that expectations regarding support are largely determined by ethnic origin. All immigrant groups – Turks and Moroccans most prominently – agree more with the statements on intergenerational obligations that children have towards their ageing parents. Our expectation that younger generations of immigrants would agree less with such

statements was not supported by the data, whereby hardly any generational differences were found among the immigrant groups. It seems that opinions on intergenerational relations and support are among the core values that are, contrary to more practical domains of life, not easily changed or adjusted in a new context after migration. However, among the Dutch we did find larger differences in perceptions on filial obligations between the generations, with overall the younger respondents indicating higher levels of filial responsibility. It may be that in the Dutch context, where independence is highly valued, elderly parents do not want to be a burden to their children and therefore show less agreement with filial obligation attitudes. It also indicates that, contrary to arguments on the decline in family commitments, family ties in Dutch society remain highly important for support. Reciprocity of support between parents and children is therefore still valued among the younger generations who most likely are in the phase of receiving support from their parents as well.

Results for actual support, however, show that the extent to which parents receive support from their adult children in various domains is not determined by their ethnic origin in the same way perceptions are. Results are much less consistent in this respect. Whereas Moroccan parents more often receive support when it comes to household chores, Dutch parents receive emotional support through expressed interest from their children more often than any other ethnic group. Surinamese parents can count on the advice of their children relatively frequently. These results indicate that it is not possible to generalise ethnic differences for several types of intergenerational support. Of course we have to be aware that actual levels of support, reported by the parent, could be determined by their perception of dependence or independence between generations. This could very well differ between ethnic groups as is also reported in other studies (see e.g. Baldassar, Baldock & Wilding 2007).

Our findings also show that there is no direct relation between expectations of filial obligation and actual support received, as was suggested in previous studies in which actual support was not measured. Overall, expectations of filial obligations and practical support received are higher among immigrant groups than for the Dutch. At the same time, our multivariate analyses show that support expectations are rarely directly related to actual received support. This latter finding generally holds for all ethnic groups. The quality of the relationship between parent and child is a much more important indicator for receiving practical as well as emotional support. We should, however, be aware that our cross-sectional data prevents us from drawing any conclusions about the causal direction of this effect. Longitudinal data on immigrant and native families are needed to shed more light on the causal relationship between relationship quality and support, but also to determine the correlation between expectations and actual support.

Three additional limitations of our study should be taken into account. The amount of support that parents receive was reported by the parents themselves. It could be that immigrant parents, confronted with an interviewer of the same ethnic background, over-report the amount of support they receive (i.e. the social desirability effect), especially when indicating strong agreement with filial obligation norms. In addition, since we could not include the child's reported help for the immigrant groups, it could be that we underestimated the support potential. Having both parent and child reports among immigrants and natives could advance insights into these issues.

Furthermore, our measurement of filial norms is based on items that relate to taking care of the elderly overall. It could very well be that parents generally agree that children should provide help, though do have different expectations when it comes to their own son or daughter whom they see struggling with practical obstacles in providing help. Furthermore, it is possible that children did indeed take care of their parents if ill, for example, but did not provide help in the household or with odd jobs in the past three months, as was measured by our support indicator. A more direct comparison of perceptions regarding their own children and actual support on the same indicator would provide better insight into the direct relationship between the two.

Finally, although we assume cohort effects expecting that older generations of immigrants, rather than younger generations, will be more of the opinion that children should support their parents, we are unable to disentangle these effects from age effects due to the cross-sectional nature of the data. The data we used are, furthermore, limited in the extent to which they cover support provided: our study did not include all children, but was limited to randomly selected children in the migrant family. A more complete coverage of the family would allow for a more comprehensive view on possible differences in support-giving between siblings by, for example, birth order and gender.

The results of our study have three main implications. First of all, perceptions on filial obligation differ strongly by ethnic origin but not by generation within ethnic groups. This indicates that acculturation in the domain of filial obligations is not evident, and that immigrants do not rapidly adjust their perceptions and orientations in this domain to the cultural patterns of the country of residence.

Secondly, we show that attitudes towards filial obligations do not translate directly into actual support. Ethnic differences in such support are therefore less pronounced than differences in attitudes. Suggestions sometimes made by policymakers, that elderly immigrants will not need any state support since 'it's their culture' to take care of the elderly might be mistaken. Finally, our analyses point to the importance of the quality of the relationship between parents and children for the amount of support

received by parents. Although we have no evidence that the quality of the relationship differs for different ethnic groups, it is known that differential rates of acculturation between first- and second-generation immigrants can lead to tensions between parents and children. More insight into possible tensions within migrant families and their effects on support between parents and adult children is also highly relevant for policies aimed at the family and integration of immigrants. Although our study contributed to the literature by focusing on one of the European welfare states, comparative cross-national research is needed to gain a fuller understanding of the effect of advanced welfare state arrangements on intergenerational support behaviour in immigrant families.

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## Annex

**Table 4.2** *Support received by type of support and ethnic group (in %)*

		Turkish	Moroccan	Surinamese	Antillean	Dutch
Help received with household chores	Several times	24	29	37	31	6
	Once or twice	33	35	20	18	17
	Never	43	37	43	52	77
Practical help received	Several times	15	24	31	21	14
	Once or twice	39	35	24	15	26
	Never	46	41	45	64	60
Interest received	Several times	49	76	80	63	74
	Once or twice	30	7	13	12	19
	Never	22	18	7	25	7
Advice received	Several times	30	26	52	28	24
	Once or twice	33	39	27	29	35
	Never	37	35	22	44	41

Source: NKPS (2002-2003, main and migrant samples)

**Table 4.3** *Means of type of support received by ethnic group*

	Turkish	Moroccan	Surinamese	Antillean	Dutch
Help with household chores	1.81 A	1.89 A	1.94 A	1.77 A	1.31 B
Practical help received	1.69 A	1.83 A	1.85 A	1.55 B	1.51 B
Interest received	2.26 A	2.61 B	2.71 B	2.42 A	2.68 B
Advice received	1.92 A	1.88 A	2.26 B	1.89 A	1.81 A

Note: Means in the same row that do not share subscripts differ at  $p < .05$  in the multiple comparison Least Significant Differences (LSD) test.

Source: NKPS (2002-2003, main and migrant samples)



Table 4.4 OLS regression coefficients for four different types of help parents report to have received from their children in the past three months

	Household chores		Practical help		Interest in personal life		Advice	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	0.99***	0.82***	0.95***	0.86***	1.17***	1.23***	0.60**	0.47*
Ethnic background (reference Dutch)								
Turkish	0.27***	0.92***	0.00	0.27	-0.36***	-0.52***	0.07	0.20
Moroccan	0.46***	0.78***	0.21	0.47	0.03	0.08	0.08	0.30
Surinamese	0.46***	0.61***	0.19*	0.32	0.02	-0.10	0.38***	0.27***
Antillean	0.31***	0.16	-0.04	-0.24	-0.16*	-0.15	0.12	0.18
Age parent	-0.00	-0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Gender of the parent (reference men)	0.20***	0.20***	0.23***	0.23***	0.07	0.09	0.12*	0.11*
Marital status parent (reference not married)	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02	-0.03	-0.02	-0.08	-0.08
General health assessment parent (1 = good/5 = poor)	0.02	0.02	0.06**	0.06**	0.00	0.00	0.06*	0.06*
Educational level parent (1 = low/3 = high)	0.04	0.04	-0.01	-0.01	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.01
Number of children	-0.04*	-0.04*	-0.04*	-0.04*	0.00	0.00	-0.02	-0.02
Gender of children (reference: no daughter)	0.10*	0.10*	0.01	0.00	0.06	0.06	0.03	0.02
Co-residence of children (reference: no co-resident child)	0.27***	0.28***	0.14*	0.14*	0.00	-0.00	0.08	0.08
Relationship quality (1 = not good/4 = very good)	0.14***	0.15***	0.16***	0.16***	0.33***	0.33***	0.28***	0.28***
Support expectations (1 = high/5 = low)	-0.06*	-0.01	-0.07	-0.04	0.03	0.01	-0.05	-0.02
Support expectations*Turkish		-0.31***		-0.13		0.08		-0.04
Support expectations*Moroc.		-0.15		-0.14		-0.05		-0.09
Support expectations*Surinam		-0.05		-0.04		0.05		-0.14*
Support expectations*Antil.		0.07		0.09		-0.00		-0.01
R <sup>2</sup>	0.23	0.24	0.11	0.12	0.21	0.21	0.15	0.15

\*p < .05      \*\*\*p < .001  
Source: NKIS (2002-2003, main and migrant samples)



## 5 Social construction of neglect: The case of unaccompanied minors from Morocco to Spain

*Núria Empez Vidal*

### 5.1 Introduction

One of the most riveting sets of images in the international press in the last decade has been the arrival of young North African boys who cross the Strait of Gibraltar trying to reach the shores of southern Spain. The majority of them are Moroccans. They enter Spain hidden under trucks or buses on ferries from Tangier, in northern Morocco, or in overloaded *pateras*, small, precarious speed boats run by professional smugglers.

The arrival of these boys has drawn considerable attention from policymakers, NGOs, scholars<sup>1</sup> and journalists. Under international law, children enjoy particular protection. As 'legal minors', children are regarded as a particularly vulnerable category of persons with specific protection needs. In addition, the young North African boys who are the subject of this chapter are also unaccompanied and thus enjoy specific protection under international law as unaccompanied minors. International humanitarian conventions view children lacking the care and supervision of an adult as 'neglected', a status that, irrespective of their nationality or circumstances, accords them immediate protection in whatever state they arrive.

Behind the sensational headlines are two issues: the pressures in the country of origin that have led these boys to embark on their journeys and reports of how they have fared in Spain. The notion of 'neglect' has been central to public debates about these boys. Typically, two types of factors may lead to situations of child neglect: 1) situations in which children's basic physical and emotional needs are disregarded and 2) situations in which a child's future prospects for success are not encouraged or invested in. Neglect may apply to all siblings; conversely, individual children may become the targets of exclusion and hence of neglect (e.g. Scheper-Hughes 1987). In such cases, families may try to invest their efforts in one child they think may have the best probability of success, neglecting other children within the family. In the case of unaccompanied Moroccan minors seeking to go to Spain, many families appear to make the opposite decision: they appear to 'neglect' the child they think will have more opportunities to succeed in migration. If a boy feels he is excluded from family investments, this may in fact encourage him to go to Spain: to

select himself for a pathway of migration. In such cases, conditions the boy encounters in leaving may put him in far greater situations of hardship than he had endured at home.

The migration of unaccompanied minors to Spain needs to be placed within the context of South-to-North migration and, as such, points to much broader issues of inequality and underdevelopment in relation to expanding global economies and their impact on North-South relations (Wolf 1982). Global North-South relations are characterised by two contradictory processes. On the one hand, economic and trade policies aim at reducing barriers to transborder exchanges of goods and capital and, to a somewhat lesser extent, services. On the other hand, migration policies simultaneously aim at limiting flows and admitting only those with sufficient human and/or financial capital. Thus, while borders increasingly lose their significance as regulatory mechanisms for global flows of capital, goods and services, they have enormously gained in importance for regulating or filtering flows of people. In the European context, the restriction of immigration policies has led to the creation of extensive buffer zones between the European Union and its immediate and more distant peripheries. In a similar vein, while freedom of movement within the EU has been massively expanded, the project of European integration has enhanced exclusion vis-à-vis third countries, notably those located in the global South. As Delgado (1998), De Genova (2005) and Calavita (2005) argue, it is the increasing restrictions for third-country nationals that produce irregular forms of migration.

Similarly, this chapter argues that global inequalities create the conditions that give rise to unaccompanied Moroccan children who arrive in Spain. In turn, Spain has created categories of marginality and deviance (such as unaccompanied minor) in which young Moroccan boys find themselves placed.

This chapter highlights the paradoxical effects of state regulation concerning unaccompanied minors, which, although intent on protecting the best interest of the child, frequently exacerbate – if not create – situations of neglect. The chapter focuses on the Autonomous Community of Catalonia in Spain, which, along with Andalucía and Madrid, is the main destination for unaccompanied Moroccan minors.

## 5.2 Background of the study

My earlier work examined the lives of unaccompanied minors in Catalonia where, as described above, many Moroccan children have come (Empez 2003). The work was based on my experiences as a professional social worker there, specialising in immigrant cases and in dealing with Spanish policies handling unaccompanied children who migrate to Spain. I began

participant observation in Barcelona in 2001. My Master's thesis (Empez 2003) on unaccompanied minors included four years of field-work in Barcelona, including visits to Tangier, Morocco, with some of the families of children I met in Spain. My most recent field-work in Morocco was on family migration dynamics, funded by the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research and forming part of my PhD dissertation for the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. During field-work in Tangier, from April to October 2006, I studied socialisation practices and reproductive strategies among families who send children to Spain and the process of decision-making in child migration. The findings then took me back to Catalonia, where I interviewed professionals in the protection system dealing with unaccompanied minors.

During the field-work in Morocco, I mainly relied on qualitative methods: participant observation, open-ended interviews, discussion groups, informal conversation and analysis of media reports. I had contact with a large number of Moroccan boys who were trying to cross over to Spain from the port. They comprised children from rural areas, boys who were temporarily on the street when I interviewed them but who don't consider themselves street children and boys coming from the city of Tangier. My subjects included people from Tangier and rural people from the district of Beni Mellal, children who were returned (i.e. deported) by Spain as 'minors' in family reunification<sup>2</sup> and their families, adults who wanted to migrate, families with children in Spain, former unaccompanied minors who were repatriated from Spain as adults, families with adult members living in Europe, young workers, students, older women, people living or working at the port, school teachers, NGO workers and members of Moroccan authorities. Finally, I also analysed various statistical data sources, including Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Démographiques (CERED),<sup>3</sup> the Spanish Municipal Register and the Spanish Census of 2001.<sup>4</sup>

### 5.3 Migration between Morocco and Spain

Migration between Morocco and Spain has been an essential element of relations between the two countries for a large part of their recent history. What has changed are the characteristics as well as the regulation of migration. Before 1985, a visa was not required to enter Spain; there were temporary agricultural and industrial workers coming to Spain for temporary work, without the intention of staying long in Spain. Such migrants were largely young men. Other Moroccans came for education or as tourists. Despite the difficulties they encountered, Moroccans found it relatively easy to come and go from Spain.

In 1985, Spain passed La Ley de Extranjería, its first Foreigners Law.<sup>5</sup>

This highly restrictive law, which coincided with, and was a requirement for, the accession of Spain to the EU, was created mainly for police control over migration to punish non-nationals in an irregular situation. The law did not provide for a permanent residence status for immigrants, and migrants could only obtain short-term permits, reflecting the country's negative views on immigration. With a major amendment of the Foreigners Law in 2000 (Law 4/2000) 'integration' became a major principle in migration policy involving, among others, the creation of a permanent residence status and a legal pathway to integration. At the same time, legal opportunities for irregular migrants to regularise themselves were significantly curtailed. Under the previous legal framework, undocumented migrants could apply for a residence permit for extraordinary circumstances if he or she had been resident in Spain for five consecutive years on Spanish territory. After the amendment, irregular migrants could get a permanent residence permit almost only by marrying a Spanish national. However, regularising one's status through proving what the Spanish legislation calls 'roots' (*arraigo*)<sup>6</sup> is still possible. The conservative government, which had won the 2000 elections, cut back some of the liberal changes, arguing that improvement of the legal status of legal migrants might work as 'pull factor' and thus introduced new restrictions with the law 8/2000. In particular, this law considerably restricted the political, employment and social rights of irregular immigrants, and made irregular migration an infraction punishable by expulsion and a residence ban in force for a period defined in the respective rulings of the courts. Finally, law 8/2000 also tightened family reunification requirements, making it more difficult for migrant families to obtain a permanent permit.

In 2003, with the adoption of the Ley Organica 14/2003 and the Real Decreto 2393/2004, the legal framework governing migration was reformed yet again and new restrictions were introduced. Under this law, migrants can lose their residence if the conditions under which they obtained their permit change within the first five years, or until they get an individual permanent residence permit. In short, it has become more difficult to gain legal status if one enters in an irregular way. The current Real Decreto 2393/2004<sup>7</sup> contains several other provisions for legal entry and residence in the country. Among them are family reunifications, a student visa or a job contract obtained in the country of origin. Most Moroccans in Spain, however, are not in a situation that would allow them to apply for any of these permits.

#### 5.4 A window of legal opportunity: 'Neglected' children

What is important about these children's moves is their potential future impact on vital events for families anticipating the problems and needs

of all their members. Generally, successful migration may affect not just the individual boys' life events, but also the life events of other family members. Because of the increasingly limited legal opportunities for legal immigration, Moroccan migrants increasingly resort to irregular migration strategies and regularisation. For Moroccan boys, the only feasible way to obtain a residence permit is being declared legally a neglected minor.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989 recognised that children had special needs for assistance and hence should be entitled to special protection. According to the convention, all signatory countries are obliged to take care of unaccompanied or neglected children, regardless of nationality, race, color, sex, language or religion within their jurisdiction. The convention recognised that every country had its own internal laws and policy structures and each was asked to create its own arrangements on how protection was to be enacted. For example, according to the *Comunidad Virtual Contra la Violencia Ejercida sobre los Niños y Adolescentes Inmigrantes sin Red de Apoyo Social*, a Spanish project under the Equal Programme of the European Commission known as CONRED (a virtual community against violence towards child and adolescent immigrants), in Denmark, Belgium, Portugal and Sweden<sup>8</sup> unaccompanied children are treated as asylum seekers irrespective of age. Meanwhile, Spain and Italy choose to treat them as neglected minors, which in the Spanish case effectively puts them in an ambiguous position between the Foreigners Law and the child protection system of the autonomous communities (CONRED 2005).<sup>9</sup>

In the Catalan case, different laws apply to the protection of the child. Law 37/1991 of 30 December on protection measures for neglected minors and adoption, arguably the most significant piece of legislation on child protection, centres on neglect. The following is the definition used by the Catalan childhood protection system in order to determine which children are neglected and which, consequently, should be the subjects of its protection:

We can consider minors neglected when:

- a) They lack persons who by law would take on the guardian role or when such persons are unable to take on this function or they would do so in a way that would put the minor at risk.
- b) When there is any evidence of failure to carry out the protective duties decreed for the protection of these minors or [such guardians] lack the basic elements for the normal development of the minor's personality.
- c) When the minor displays signs of physical or psychological mistreatment, or sexual abuse, or similar cases of abuse (Law 37/1991 of 30 December on protection measures for neglected minors and adoption).<sup>10</sup>

Unaccompanied minors meet minimum conditions when they lack guardians. Under the Catalan child protection system, minors without a guardian in the country are thus considered neglected, and the Catalan government automatically assumes the role of *tutela* or the 'custodian' who takes legal responsibility for them. The complication is that the rules governing unaccompanied children from Morocco fall under both the childhood protection system and the Foreigners Law. Thus, being under the guardianship of the state and being provided with food and shelter does not change their irregular status. This implies that children might be sent back any time, and that they cannot engage in activities that require legal residence. Nevertheless, being in custody of the state is a way to gain legal status, but it cannot be obtained immediately. When a boy enters the Spanish protection system, his case comes under a specific article (RD 2393/2004) that approves the regulation of the Foreigners Law concerning the rights and liberties of foreigners in Spain and their social integration,<sup>11</sup> regulating the entry and residence of foreign nationals, namely, art. 92 about unaccompanied minors. Paragraph 5 of that article of the Foreigners Law stipulates the following:

Passing nine months since the minor was put in the competent services of minors' protection, in agreement with section 2, and once having tried repatriation with his or her family or to the country of origin, and this having not been possible, will grant him or her the residence authorisation to which refers the statutory law 4/2000, of 11 of January.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, if a boy arrives in Spain and is judged to be both a minor (with legal papers or through a radiography test) and neglected, he should be taken to an emergency centre created for unaccompanied children. The government is then required to try to reunify him with his family within nine months. In order to assess whether family reunification is feasible and in the best interest of the child, government officials are required to carry out a telephone interview with parents. If the government has not succeeded in reunifying the boy with his family within the specified period or if the government determines that family reunification would not be in his best interest, he must be given a residence permit in Spain.

In the case of Catalonia, the implementation of international legal norms of child protection has created specific opportunities for unaccompanied minors. However, Catalan authorities treat children without a status differently from how they treat those with legal status in Catalonia. In particular, the Catalan state has created special centres for Moroccans, whereas the members of other communities, for example, South Americans, are mixed with Catalan children. This creation of a parallel system has been criticised by several NGOs (see e.g. CONRED 2005; Save the



Children 2004). Under this parallel system, children from specific foreign countries can obtain protection if they can prove that they have nobody at all to look after them. Catalan children or children who are members of other communities typically enter into the protection system through different circuits.

If, on the other hand, a child is found to have some relation in Spain (even if a distant relative), he or she cannot enter the protection system. In most cases, however, relatives of this kind are not in a position to take care of the child, or have no interest in doing so, leaving the child in a liminal situation: not fitting into the category of unaccompanied foreign minor and unable to enter the 'normal' protection system. These children, even if they are at risk of being deported due to their irregular status, are, in a sense, invisible from a child protection perspective because they are ineligible for child protection mechanisms.

## 5.5 Becoming neglected

In the following section, I summarise several ways in which neglect among Moroccan children arises. I will refer to unaccompanied minors and the ones back in Morocco trying to migrate, both migrants, and those who are not successful in migrating, whether directly or indirectly. In describing situations of neglect, I do not limit my analysis to situations of neglect that may arise on Spanish territory, but will also reflect on 'neglect' in Morocco and the interrelationship between situations of neglect on both sides of the Strait of Gibraltar. To illustrate, I use case studies obtained during my field-work and in some of my interviews.

### 5.5.1 *Exposure at the port in Tangier*

Many boys staying at the port in Tangier while awaiting an opportunity to cross are exposed to physical danger. This period of time could last for years.

I met H. in 2001. His family lives in the suburbs of Tangier, in a poor neighborhood, in a small self-constructed house. His father is retired and his mother is a housekeeper; he has an older brother and a younger sister. In summer of 2006, when I met him, H was seventeen years old, his older brother of twenty worked in a small leather factory, without a contract or social security, providing the only income that enters the home. His younger sister is still at school. He has been trying to cross to Spain for five years. He reached Spain three times, but each time was sent back. He sleeps during the day, and goes to the port at night. He had been beaten by the police and the port security members on several occasions. He argues that his family knows his intention, and they don't try to stop him,

but they don't support him either.

They [referring to his family] said that I'm a *shem kare*<sup>13</sup> ['drug user']. Though I just use drugs sometimes, they don't believe me. One day I will reach Spain, then they will change their opinion about me. I will help them to get out of poverty.

The family does not trust H. about his real intentions to try to reach Spain. Sometimes he spends some nights at the port and uses the house just as a base camp to rest and recover.

For H., the fact that he is the second child is crucial; his older brother cannot think of migration because he had to work to support the family. H. is free of this duty, but the family could not afford to pay his school fees. Since the younger sister showed more interest in school and better aptitude than him, she was the one whose studies they supported. H. has many friends from the neighborhood who are now in Spain. They told him about the protection system. He still lives with his family who give him food and shelter. His family does not think he is serious about trying to cross; they think that he is just having fun with his friends and taking drugs. H. is risking his life daily at the port; his only activity is to try to migrate, so he has left school and other activities that his peers can pursue. Although his parents, by providing food and shelter, fulfil some of the functions expected from families, their relationship lacks several elements usually associated with a 'functioning family', notably protection, communication and affection.

The case of H. represents the majority of the migrant boys who live in Tangier, a boy who was able to draw on the occasional help of his family because they lived in the city. As I said above, however, the situation of boys living in rural areas is worse, because they lack support from their families while they are in Tangier away from home.

B. is another boy who has suffered from the harsh conditions of trying to live at the port and migrate from it. Unlike H., however, his family does not live in Tangier but in a distant rural area. I met B. in the surroundings of the port area in May 2006. A thin, illiterate and shy rural sixteen-year-old boy, he has been trying to migrate intermittently for two years. He spent some time at home in a rural area and some time in the vicinity of the Tangier port trying to cross. So far, he has never reached Spain. In June 2006, he broke his elbow falling from the top of the six-metre-high wall dividing the beach from the port. He tried to live at the port in this condition, but the other boys made fun of his bad luck. He decided to go back to his parents' house (ten hours by bus to the rural area where it was located) until he recovered. Before he left Tangier, B. told me that when he recovered he would try again. His family knows what he is doing, and makes comparisons to other boys who have achieved their goal. I asked

him if he thought his family knows the conditions he lives in; he answered that boys never explain the real conditions of living at the port to their families because they do not want to worry them, but he thinks they can imagine how it could be. B. thus represented a case of a boy experiencing neglect at the port but, because he was far from his family's support, he was forced not just to try to migrate but to survive in the meantime, looking for shelter, food, a place to wash himself, etc. Like other boys in such circumstances, he easily gets exhausted without any external support; his clothes also get older and dirtier faster than those of the boys from Tangier, and it is easy to recognise him by his ragged looks. This has made him more vulnerable.

### 5.5.2 *Becoming a street child in Spain*

A boy who migrates and becomes aware that he is going to be sent back to Morocco is very likely to escape the protection system and go live on the streets. There, he feels that he has failed his family members and ends up without protection, either from the state or his own family.

One of the first motivations of this research started with the question of why some of these children end up on the streets (Empez 2005). Five years of intermittent field-work in Barcelona, including talking with many of these boys and interviewing some of the professionals who interact with them, have persuaded me that a large number of boys mistrust the protection system; they are afraid of being sent back to Morocco, and they are living without protection. As a social educator told me in an interview:

I know a lot of cases in which they [officials] gave them [Moroccan boys] a proposal to return, based on the concept of family reunification. That means that they are not accepted to stay in Spain. If they stay in the protection system the police will come to take them and they will be sent back under family reunification. These children don't want to return and they end up on the street or leaving for another autonomous community. Sometimes this other community gives them a different response, or it helps them to integrate, but what happens is that they [the minors] develop a certain mistrust of the protection system. And kids who stay here on the streets in Barcelona and don't want to return, what do they have? If they don't leave the centre, they will be repatriated; then they become minors moving around to other parts of Spain or even Europe, searching for a place that really welcomes them, or they will make a living off the street.

Some boys, if they have friends or relatives, are able to live outside the system in relatively 'normal' living conditions, but most of them end up

living in *harbas*, occupied houses in poor conditions, and making the street their way of life. A large number of these boys end up in the justice system or in mental care. The same social educator pointed out:

But of course this makes them exhausted, insecure and mistrustful. In the end, it is like a self-fulfilling prophecy... We can find some small kids who, when they first arrived, were thirteen; they were in Madrid, then came here; after that they were sent back and I don't know. The kids have been switching communities, because everywhere people give them the same answer and they don't really want to leave. And then of course they are kids who have been on the street since they were thirteen, sixteen and seventeen and entering and living in the centres, they have really, really, deteriorated.

Especially when they know they are going to be sent back through 'family reunification', most try their luck in other autonomous communities; if unsuccessful, they move on to the streets. These boys depend on their social networks and personal abilities. Many become excluded, consuming alcohol and drugs. It is also common to observe self-injury scars. If they escape the protection centres, no one goes to look for them.

To illustrate, I knew three boys who in April 2006 left the child protection system because they were aware they were going to be sent back through family reunification, and lived for two months on the streets. After a time, they decided to leave for the Basque Country, where they spent three months. The Basque Country's new autonomous community has not yet ruled on the future of these boys; two decided to stay, but the third, tired and scared, decided to go back to the last autonomous community, where he lived on the streets. He was caught stealing in November 2006 and was last reported in a justice centre.

### 5.5.3 *The risks of family reunification*

As described, a boy who manages to get to Spain may be sent back under so-called 'family reunification'. Children who arrive in the Spanish protection system know that they are unwelcome and in a precarious situation, but the prospect of being sent back to Morocco to their families is hardly a goal. Rather, it is a threat that hangs over them.

Failing in his plans and those of the family that invested in him, he will try again to migrate, eventually worsening relations with his family. My observations in the field and in interviews with 'reunified' boys and professionals suggest that few such cases fulfill the requirements under the law of family reunification. The law specifically protects the right of minors to live with their families, a notion not limited to non-nationals. In case of child neglect, the Catalan child protection system thus routinely con-

siders the possibility of returning the child to his parents. But to do that, the system must guarantee that the family fulfill the requirements to take good care of their child. In the case of Moroccan children, however, authorities lack the infrastructure to make a profound analysis of the families' situation in the country of origin – as required by law – and most reunifications seem to take place without the requisite guarantee. My field-work did not turn up a single case of family reunification that would have complied with all the requirements of law (see also Jimenez 2003, 2004, 2006). In the case of Moroccan minors, 'family reunification' paradoxically may lead to neglect in Morocco; few boys are readily welcomed back in their families. Frequently, the family does not understand why the child has been sent back and often will blame the boy for not succeeding in his migration project. If other boys have made it, they reason, ours must have done something wrong.

The case of A. whom I met in the Tangier port area at the end of April 2006 is instructive. When we became acquainted, he was seventeen years old and had just returned from his rural home area to try to migrate again. He also seemed a very shy boy. After seeing each other many times, we developed a good relationship and he became one of my best informants. I also visited his family in the rural area where they lived, which helped me to better understand the context of unaccompanied minors.

When he was fifteen, A. managed to get to Spain. He first lived in Almeria, working in the fields. When a compatriot told him that as a minor he could have benefits from the protection system, he moved to Madrid and was accepted into the childhood protection system where he lived for fourteen months. According to the Spanish Foreigners Law, A. should have been given a residence permit after nine months in the protection system. Instead, he was sent back through family reunification in March 2006. His repatriation was widely discussed in the national media for its spectacular execution. The police came to look for him at two o'clock in the morning. When he realised what was happening, he entrenched himself in his room, barricading it with furniture. The police tried to get in for more than four hours; he threatened to kill himself if they came. When the police finally broke down the door he was trying to escape with sheets out the window of the ninth floor. Another police officer, knowing what could happen, was on the eighth floor and rescued him from falling. In a state of shock, he was transferred to the airport, where a doctor saw him and put him on the plane. They brought him to Casablanca, where he saw a judge and was told to go home. His family, however, knew nothing of this 'family reunification' until they saw him arriving. The family and the entire neighborhood could not understand why he was sent back. Ashamed, he spent just a week with his family in the rural area where they lived, and then went back to Tangier to try to migrate again. Ever since, he has been living on the

street at the port. He had been beaten by port guards three times. In summer, with the annual arrival of Moroccans living in Europe, an event in which the returnees display their wealth and seek out brides – and the city puts on an extravagant welcome – his father told him: ‘The only thing you brought from Spain was your long hair.’ A. knows that it is not easy to go back to Spain, but he argues that ‘there is no alternative’. When I visited his family, he just agreed to go with me because of my request that we do so, and he returned to the port as quickly as possible. The situation with the father was tense; they love each other, but all the hopes in his migration were gone. According to the family’s expectations, he was supposed to be the first to go and then help his older brother migrate, too; then his 45-year-old father could retire. Now the father and the son do not trust each other; both blame each other for A.’s current situation.

As this case suggests, the situation of boys who are sent back is worse than those who never reach Spain. They can either be victims of family reunification policy, seeing their migratory hopes dashed after reaching Spain, or they may be humiliated back in their own country, becoming a target of neighbors’ and relatives’ laughter; the dream of Europe was in their hands yet they let it escape. Above all, family reunification may not redress situations of neglect, but instead lead to renewed neglect in the country of origin. The majority of boys thus attempt to migrate again, often under worse conditions than their first time. Not only are they older, but they mistrust the protection system. Others become socially excluded, some become mentally ill or use drugs. In a wide range of cases, it is apparent how the assumption that family reunification is in the child’s best interest proves problematic; the underlying premise that the family will provide a safe place for the child does not hold true in reality.

#### 5.5.4 *The consequences of ‘success’ in the childhood protection system*

What families and their sons both want has the perverse effect of ‘forcing’ these boys into neglect. This is due to the severely limited economic and migration options available and their having to assume adult roles at a very young age, taking care of themselves and living apart from their families. The case of F. illustrates this.

I first met F., then aged seventeen, in Barcelona in 2002. He had come to Spain one year earlier. He later obtained his residence and work permits and got a good job in a factory. Talking with him, I learned that he badly missed Morocco and would have liked to go back to live with his parents. Yet he had a responsibility to help his family and they would not understand if he decided to go back. Like an adult, F. feels the difficulties and struggles of migration, but he is young. Some can handle the situation, but others who, even after succeeding in getting to Spain and becoming

legal, experience anxiety, depression and other mental problems related to this lonely migration.

I met J.'s father at the end of April 2006. We met in Morocco in the taxi he was driving. He asked me if I could find his son, who left two months ago as an unaccompanied minor. He knew his son was in Barcelona. Keeping contact with the father, I started to ask about the boy in the Catalan protection system and my informal network. His father told me that he could not sleep thinking about the situation of his son. After a month, I found an educator who knew him. When I brought this news to the family, they were really happy. The family lives in moderate circumstances and thought that the migration of their son would give them a possibility for upward mobility. Knowing that only a 'neglected' child would be allowed to stay in Spain, when a social worker from Catalonia called them, they exaggerated their current situation to ensure J. would be accepted in the protection system. They thus described their situation as one of extreme poverty, characterised by marital conflict between the mother and the father. Under the current arrangements, there is little scope for social workers to get to know the real situation of the families in question. Spanish officials must carry out a telephone interview. In most cases, more experienced families know what to say to get their child accepted into the welfare system in Europe. Families without resources, by contrast, do not know how to act, making it more likely that these children will actually be sent back to situations of neglect.

Most boys who manage to stay in Spain because of their 'neglected' status are proud of their accomplishments in managing to stay, though stress that they lead a hard life. Many of them report that they feel lonely, especially at times of festivity like Ramadan or Eid al Kabir, which are major holidays in their countries of origin, both being celebrations involving families. On these occasions, they must pass the time alone in Europe. They say they cannot reveal the struggles they undergo in Spain because they do not want to worry their relatives. Sometimes they feel pressure to send money, when they do not even earn enough to off live themselves. They can only go to visit their families if they have enough money, often through borrowing, to pretend that they have an easy life in Spain.

### 5.5.5 *Accompanied but unattended*

The rise in what I call 'transcontinental fostering', in which children move in with relatives or family friends, means that these children have shelter, protection and food; some of them, if they are younger than sixteen, can even attend school. However, these children are in a paradoxical situation. According to the Spanish government, they are not unaccompanied minors because they are in the country with an adult. Because the government recognises the guardianship in fostering cases, but does not make it legal,

the Spanish police effectively turn a blind eye to such children who cannot obtain legal residence permits. They are not sent back when they are still minors, though when they turn eighteen they become irregular migrants and are liable to be deported.

One social worker from the city hall social services from a city near Barcelona told me that a man reported how his relatives in Morocco had sent his niece to him without telling him they were going to do so. He could not take care of her, he explained, and wanted to put her in the child protection system. The social worker called the emergency child service and explained the situation. In response, the protection system told the social worker that because this girl had a family of reference, she had to stay with the uncle or she would be sent back to Morocco. The social worker explained the situation to the uncle, who then decided to keep the girl in custody. But, as the social worker learned later, this man had an open file with the child protection system because he had abused his own children, whom the local government had wanted to take into protective custody.

In effect, his own children, who are legal Spanish residents and have residence permits, are treated by the Catalan government as children, as are the rest of Catalan children, but the girl who is fostered according to Moroccan custom is not. Nonetheless, she must stay in the same house, under the protection of the same man whom the government had declared unfit to take care of his own children.

This case concerns a girl, but it parallels the situation of the boys who do not fit in the category of unaccompanied minors. They have difficulties entering the 'normal' child protection system because the government looks only at the 'accompanied' piece of their situation, ignoring the other elements of neglect. In such cases, the government tries to treat these children more as irregular migrants than as unaccompanied minors needing protection. As migrants, they only require protection if they are unaccompanied, without giving importance to other factors that should warrant their being defined as children lacking protection.

## 5.6 Conclusion

The migration of unaccompanied minors from Morocco to Spain represents a specific case of globalisation and it reflects the persistent and deeply entrenched inequalities between the global North and the global South. This chapter has shown how the legal framework for migration impacts minors and their families and how it intersects with, and partly contradicts, child protection legislation. The legal framework has an impact in Europe, particularly on how institutions handle unaccompanied minors; it has an impact on Moroccan families, particularly in the way child migration, as



a coping strategy against poverty, affects ideas about the meaning of children and migration. The changing legal framework regulating migration, both nationally in Spain and at the EU level, have made migration a phenomenon very different from what it was just a decade or two ago. For Moroccans, it has placed increasing emphasis on children as the bearers of this burden, and has made it increasingly difficult for them to return, even if 'successful,' for anything except short visits. They are separated from their families at young ages not just by spatial, but also emotional distance, in that they cannot reveal the extent of their struggles. Some of these children become hence neglected by the very systems that are responsible for their protection.

In Spain, the legal and social status of Moroccan child migrants is viewed with ambivalence. On the one hand, they are minors who should be protected; on the other, they are illegal migrants who should be sent back. If they manage to reach legal Spanish territory, humanitarian laws governing child protection are supposed to take precedence, treating them as neglected children who require protection by the state as well as the international community. However, the very humanitarian ideology that claims to protect them in fact works against them in two ways. First, for children to qualify for state protection, the only pathway to legality open to them is to be seen as neglected – meaning that Moroccan families must distance themselves from their children. Second, Spanish officials, citing international legal humanitarian codes that stress the family as a key human value, with its emphasis on the rights of children to live with their parents, use the idiom of family reunification as a rationale for sending these children back. For such children, their families, formerly supportive, now come to resent them as 'failures', refusing to accept them back as full family members. Family reunification is hardly the result.

The globalisation process, while promoted by developed countries, is contradictory. It promotes free circulation of goods but also extensive control of people, making marginalised people the workforce that Europe needs. In the case of unaccompanied minors, as Suarez in Checa et al. (2006) note:

it is a disquieting phenomenon in a double sense, first because the special vulnerability of the minors is evident, crossing the powerful borders between countries and continents [...] and second, because they manifest their capacity to navigate among the interstices of the contradictions of our Western society, and even the pathetic and dangerous comprise their strategies of resistance.

These boys desire to consume Western goods, to have access to Western benefits such as holidays and medical insurance. But they desire these things not just for themselves. They know their migration could change

the course of their family members' lives. Each time a boy reaches Spain hidden under a truck or a bus, however, the failure of the ideals of human rights and the precariousness of familial reproduction become transparent.

The expanding EU border and concomitant tactics of exclusion have come at a high price. In Morocco, there have been enormous repercussions for marginal people who struggle to make ends meet or as they are trying to find access to the wealth of the EU. For their children, however, the costs are becoming even higher. The fact that under humanitarian law children must be neglected to qualify for protection of the state and 'neglect' is the only realistic means to get legal status in Europe generates real neglect among children, both in Europe and North Africa, whether unintended or intentional. Unaccompanied children are not seen as minors, but as *unaccompanied*. They need protection, as the international laws point out, but they are treated as immigrants. This is a reason why two parallel lines of protection exist: one for unaccompanied minors and another for other children, whether foreigners with residence permits or Catalan children. In this case, we point to a gap in the system of protection that leaves out all children in irregular administrative situations who are not entirely unaccompanied.

With the constant change in policies regulating migration and family reunification and increasing border controls, we do not know how the next generation of potential migrants will be affected. We do not know who in the future is going to appear as the best candidate to represent a family abroad and who will be the next to feel the perverse effects of changing laws in a globalised world. Since the laws are changing rapidly and the EU is making major efforts to send back children through family reunification, the unaccompanied minors phenomenon will likely decrease in significance or change in character in the next few years. Nevertheless, the fundamental contradictions between individual migrants' migration strategies, migration control and humanitarian laws are likely to remain in the future.

## Acknowledgments

This paper has gained much from the support of Caroline Bledsoe. I would also like to thank the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research for financial support of my work and my colleagues Gunnar Andersson, Annett Fleischer and Montserrat Ventura for comments on earlier versions of this chapter. I am grateful to all the boys and families that contributed their histories and to Àlex Muñoz, Mercedes Jimenez, Vicens Galea, Marta Civit and Laila Bakkali for their help in the field.

## Notes

- 1 Most of the literature and findings on unaccompanied minors – Capdevila (2003), CONRED (2005), Empez (2005), Jimenez (2004), UNICEF (2005) – is about boys. However, there also exist social networks for girls who come to be fostered by families in Europe and who quickly become invisible subjects in the unaccompanied minors migratory phenomenon.
- 2 The meaning of ‘family reunification’ differs here from its meaning in the context of admission policies. In the context of child protection legislation, the term refers to the reunification of children with their parents, based on the ‘best interest of the child’ principle and a child’s right to live with family members. Legally, thus, the child is not ‘expelled’, but simply sent back to its family.
- 3 <http://www.cered.hcp.ma>.
- 4 <http://www.ine.es>.
- 5 Ley Orgánica 7/1985, de 1 de Julio, sobre derechos y libertades de los extranjeros en España.
- 6 This consists of proof of having been resident in the county for three continuous years, having a crime-free record, possessing a minimum one-year job contract and being closely related to a legal resident (parent, child or spouse; not qualifying are siblings, cousins or other relatives) – or by possessing a report expedited by social workers at the local city hall confirming that the migrant has developed social and cultural ‘roots’ in the country.
- 7 The legal framework has since been amended and a new law was adopted in 2009 (Law 2 of 11 December 2009).
- 8 <http://www.peretarres.org/daphneconred/estudi/index.html>.
- 9 For the case of Catalonia, see Llei 8/1995, 27 del juliol, d’atenció i protecció dels infants i adolescents.
- 10 <http://www.gencat.net/benestar/dgaia/conceptes.htm>.
- 11 Ley Orgánica 4/2000, de 11 de enero, sobre derechos y libertades de los extranjeros en España y su integración social.
- 12 Article 92.5 reads in Spanish as follows:  
*Artículo 92.5 Transcurridos nueve meses desde que el menor haya sido puesto a disposición de los servicios competentes de protección de menores, de acuerdo con el apartado 2, y una vez intentada la repatriación con su familia o al país de origen, si esta no hubiera sido posible, se procederá a otorgarle la autorización de residencia a la que se refiere la Ley Orgánica 4/2000, de 11 de enero.*
- 13 *Shem kare* is a nickname for a drug-using boy who inhales solvents. In Arabic ‘*shem*’ means ‘to inhale’ and ‘*kare*’ is the dissolvent.

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## **Section II**

Gender, generation and work in the migrant family



## 6 The problem of 'human capital': Gender, place and immigrant household strategies of reskilling in Vancouver

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### 6.1 Introduction

During the past few decades, immigration policies across Europe have become more restrictive, with family-related migration as the most accessible and feasible mode to enter a country (on marriage migration in the Netherlands see Suksomboon this volume). In her chapter on Switzerland, Riaño (this volume) notes that the ratio of family-related immigration to labour immigration is high due to the fact that the government has traditionally controlled the latter more than the former. In contrast, as a largely immigrant-receiving country, Canada has increasingly developed an economic discourse that is highly restrictive in privileging the skilled economic immigrant over other immigrants seeking permanent residency. In 2006, Canada accepted 55 per cent of immigrants as economic class (primarily made up of skilled workers), 28 per cent as family class and 13 per cent as protected persons (refugees). The primary aim of the selection process is to admit skilled workers whose human capital will ensure they are flexible and self-sufficient and thereby ready to immediately contribute to the nation's economic goals. Such idealised immigrants are allowed to bring 'dependent' family members with them – spouses (or common-law partners) and dependent children – under strict eligibility conditions (Li 2003, 2004).<sup>1</sup> In 2006, 44,163 skilled workers admitted as principal applicants were accompanied by 61,786 dependants. The majority (70 per cent) of primary applicants were men; 30 per cent were women (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2007), indicating that the selection process is highly gendered.

In common with Europe (see e.g. all this volume Banfi & Boccagni; Bonizzoni, Evergeti & Ryan; Fleischer; Gonzalez-Ferrer), migration decisions to Canada are rarely individual but instead are primarily family and community strategies. Yet, the human capital discourse underlying Canada's selection process renders invisible the family members who accompany the principal immigrant and her or his relationship to social and economic outcomes. Canada's immigration policies and programmes give little recognition of how families contribute to integration and, indeed, tend to portray families as 'burdens' on the state and unworthy of support

(Arat-Koc 1999; McLaren & Black 2005). If mentioned at all, immigrant families are frequently constructed as 'problems' to be effectively managed through state policies. In many national contexts (see also all this volume Van Walsum on the Netherlands; Grillo on the United Kingdom; Riaño on Switzerland), these 'problems' are interpreted through cultural practices said to be incompatible with national norms. Such discourses surface in Canada from time to time. More commonly, however, economic discourses define family members, including wives, as 'unproductive' and hence undesirable immigrants (this negative view also exists in the European context, as noted in González-Ferrer this volume). In giving preference to the economic class, Canadian immigration policy reflects neo-liberal ideology that emphasises economic self-sufficiency as a measure of an immigrant's worth, reduces notions of citizenship and citizens' rights to economic obligations and correspondingly problematises immigrant families (Abu-Laban 1998).

In this chapter we focus on immigrant families where the main applicant entered Canada through the skilled worker programme to examine how 'human capital' is enacted and the conditions under which it may be developed and deployed. We examine the process of enacting human capital by drawing on longitudinal, qualitative data from our five-year study, which included recent immigrants from a variety of source countries. Our previous work has shown how the flexibility of the household unit, and its constituent members, enables immigrants to adopt responsive strategies to changing circumstances over time. Rather than a burden, we have argued, immigrant households may be a central lynchpin to successful integration. We found that gender was implicated in household strategies and the construction of flexibility, especially in the case of women who sustained the daily livelihood of family members who enter and exit a complex array of workplaces and training programmes as they seek to integrate socially and economically in Canada (Creese et al. 2008). Our work supports that of Buzar, Ogden and Hall (2005: 424) who have noted the integral part played by a negotiation of gender roles in a household in producing flexible 'family and employment patterns in the macro economy' (see also all this volume Bonizzoni; Gonzalez-Ferrer; Varrel).

Here we further develop our work to investigate how members of migrating households engage with the local labour market, schools or other community services. Since Canadian employers usually do not recognise the 'human capital' that migrants bring with them, the processes of acquiring new, and transforming pre-existing, cultural and social capital into eventual economic returns are complex and multifaceted. Drawing on Bourdieu (1986), the chapter explores how household members develop and deploy multiple, interrelated forms of capital in the quest for economic security and social integration. This process suggests



a far more complicated and uneven translation of educational credentials, work experience and skills into jobs than human capital discourse acknowledges. We demonstrate that household strategies of 'human capital' can usefully be examined through attention to women's deployment of diverse forms of capital (including emotional capital) as integral to the successful integration of other family members.

The chapter begins with an introduction to human capital discourse in relation to immigrant family households and to other forms of capital explored in the chapter. The study methods are described before we analyse how various forms of capital come into play within the household, how they are related to gender and how they may be transformed into economic capital.

## **6.2 Human capital discourse and the immigrant family household**

Human capital theory is the dominant theoretical approach to the analysis of labour markets in global capitalism (McBride 2000). The core of human capital theory postulates that: 'higher levels of skill and knowledge, achieved through education and training, lead to higher productivity which is expressed in higher earnings for those who possess them' (McBride 2000: 161). Firmly rooted in the neo-liberal paradigm, human capital theory rests on value-laden, Western-market definitions of workers' skills and credentials as formally obtained, institutionally recognised and instrumental to the goal of economic self-sufficiency. The theory envisages human capital as a neutral, linear process whereby individual effort to acquire skills and credentials are appropriately rewarded in the labour market. The individual in this theory is disembodied: unmarked by race, gender, social or cultural capital, or other power relations that shape processes of recognition and economic rewards for 'human capital'.

Canada's point system and its human capital criteria involve an ideological and discursive process in the evaluation of skill for defining who may immigrate, who may migrate under strict conditions or who may not enter the country at all (Colins in Depatie-Pelletier 2008; McLaren & Dyck 2004). In creating a hierarchy of skills, the economic theory of human capital provides a rationale for distinct and unequal entry points of immigrants and migrants into Canada. Differential rankings of occupations and skills are highly correlated with gender and nationality, resulting in discrimination against women and workers from specific developing countries. Since workers (especially women) from the global South are less likely to fulfil 'human capital' criteria of skill than workers from the global North, their entry into Canada is usually temporary; they are allowed to work in the country for a specific employer during a specified period,

after which time they must 'go back home'. Because lower-skilled migrants and their families lack valuable skills, according to human capital discourse, they are unsuitable for landed immigration status.

Within this discursive framework, the Canadian immigration system selects 'skilled' immigrants as permanent residents on the basis of increasingly restrictive 'human capital' criteria. Before 2001, the point system awarded a maximum of 31 points out of 70 to the possession of education credentials and to official language fluency (English or French). The new Immigration and Refugee Protection Act increased points for these two categories to 49 out of 75 to assess the suitability of an applicant for entry to Canada as a landed immigrant (Li 2003). This selection process stresses the embodiment of skills and characteristics that are anticipated to equip the 'independent' immigrant with the flexibility demanded by the labour market.

The point system puts into play neo-liberal principles that reduce human beings to autonomous economic actors and that assume the distribution of work (e.g. level of pay, degree of employment) is simply the result of 'human capital', not of social inequalities such as class, gender and race (McBride 2000). Yet due to gender inequalities, women, generally have fewer opportunities than men to meet the skills criteria (Arat-Koc 1999) and are less likely to enter Canada as principal applicants in the economic class (see also Suksomboon this volume on the notion of 'gendered geographies of power'). The point system discounts the work and skills of those who have other experiences in non-dominant cultures, social classes, age groups and genders. This immigration process obscures the many contributions that non-selected immigrants make in the paid workforce, the home and the community (McLaren & Dyck 2002). For example, immigrant families often initially rely on the labour force participation of wives, categorised as dependants, and only later on that of husbands as well (Ng 1992). Human capital theory, underlying the points system, does not adequately recognise that migration is a family rather than an individual strategy and, as such, the domestic sphere is closely interwoven with labour market activities. Immigration policies and practices that fail to acknowledge the household as integral to the economic, social and cultural workings of neo-liberal economies (Rankin 2003) are unable to account for the dynamic development of 'human capital' in the pursuit of social and economic integration.

In addition, Canadian government policies, based on human capital theory, assume portability of skills: that educational credentials, skills and work experience transfer across national boundaries in a linear, predictable and equitable fashion. The debate in Canada fails to acknowledge the non-portability of skills. In reality, however, skilled immigrants from countries outside of Great Britain and its former 'white dominions' routinely find that the skills, educational credentials and work experience they

bring with them into Canada are not recognised as human capital, having little or no value in the Canadian labour market. As a result, these immigrants are forced to develop diverse strategies of reskilling in an effort to acquire and deploy qualities that will be recognised in the local context. In contrast to neo-liberal human capital discourse that makes these processes invisible, we suggest employing Bourdieu's notion of multiple interrelated capitals to explain the complex, non-linear, gendered, racialised and place-based transformation of various forms of capital into economic security in the context of immigration to Canada.

### **6.3 Family household strategies and the cultivation of multiple capitals**

While the Canadian immigration system selects skilled workers primarily on the basis of their 'human capital', extensive literature suggests that most immigrants are unable to transfer educational credentials, skills and prior work experience readily into local labour markets. (see also Bonizzoni this volume for similar downward occupational and social mobility in the case of family reunification migrants).<sup>2</sup> Since the 1990s, immigrants are entering an increasingly polarised, 'flexible' and precarious labour market (Creese 2007; Galabuzi 2006). Newcomers not only have to negotiate a difficult labour market, many are also involved with schooling at various stages, both for themselves and their children, in pursuit of education and skills that translate into some form of human capital with local currency.

Bourdieu's theory of capitals provides a dynamic account, sensitive to local context, of how situated groups employ, generate and reproduce resources. Scholars have begun to explore how Bourdieu's ideas help explain the process of immigrant resettlement that involves the social devaluation of skills and knowledge within specific hierarchies. Studies show how various types of capitals are evaluated differently in one context than another and how migrants experience the differences acutely. For example, economic capital has a different purchasing power depending on context, and so do the 'exchange rates' of social and cultural capital (Kelly & Lusi 2006). In contrast to the narrow concept of human capital in neo-liberal theory that refers to individual skills and qualifications, Bourdieu's theory incorporates these qualities into a broader category of cultural capital, including the embodied 'resources' of gender, class and 'race'. His theory helps to explain how a system of social reproduction of power relations is perpetuated and rendered 'objective' (Kelly & Lusi 2006) and how, for example, upper segments of the labour market exclude highly skilled immigrants (Bauder 2003, 2005).

Bourdieu (1986) identifies three main forms of capital: cultural (modes of thinking, dispositions, tastes, etc.), social (comprising social

networks) and economic (forms of wealth). In addition, symbolic capital is 'manifested in individual prestige and personal qualities, such as authority and charisma' (Reay 2004: 58). For Bourdieu, forms of capital are relational and cannot be understood in isolation from one another. They interact and together constitute advantage and disadvantage as they are closely tied to differentiations in social class and the ability of classes to attain and maintain valued material and social resources.

While Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction has shown the importance of families in the maintenance of class structure, his work also lends itself to a more dynamic analysis in the case of immigration. In negotiating with the labour market and other spheres such as the volunteer sector, community services and schools, our research suggests immigrant family households are involved in a complex process of developing and transforming multiple capitals – and, as we show, gender is integral to these dynamics.

Feminist scholars have critiqued Bourdieu's inadequate attention to gender (and lack of attention to race) and extended his approach to consider how women's care and support activities constitute forms of capital implicated in constructing, maintaining and transforming broader social inequalities. In extending Bourdieu's concept of capitals, for example, Reay (1998) has shown how the gendered practices of mothers involved with their children's schooling generate cultural capital. The middle-class mothers in her study invested heavily in time and mental and emotional labour in their children's education, but mothers with fewer resources and less social power were unable to generate cultural capital to the same extent. More recently, Reay (2004) has developed the gendered notion of 'emotional capital', initially identified by Nowotny (in Reay 2004), suggesting that emotional capital usefully complements the primary triad of cultural, social and economic capital laid out in Bourdieu's theory of practice. Reay (2004: 61) draws on Allatt's (1993) definition of emotional capital as 'emotionally valued assets and skills, love and affection, expenditure of time, attention, care and concern'. Reay's notion of emotional capital more fully explicates Bourdieu's observations on women's predominance in maintaining relationships through the 'practical and symbolic work which generates devotion, generosity and solidarity' (Reay 2004: 57). Adding to this analysis, Gillies (2006) shows how the 'invisible' emotional labour of working-class mothers' involvement in their children's schooling generates emotional capital in keeping their children safe, soothing experiences of school failure and challenging injustice in the context of poverty, vulnerability and failure.

Bourdieu's interest in the possibility of transforming one type of capital to another is key to understanding social inequality and social change. These complex transformations involve the differential value of distinct forms of capital, for example, in the conversion of economic capital (i.e.

wealth) into cultural capital (a university degree at a prestigious institution), or transforming cultural capital into social capital (useful social networks) or economic capital (good jobs) (Bourdieu 1986). In the case of cultural capital, Reay notes that the family is the main transmitter, but its practices take different forms and are highly gendered. While there is not a hard boundary between activities associated with the accumulation and transformation of forms of capital, our own work echoes that of other feminist scholars who note the predominance of women in child-care and the 'emotion work' of maintaining family relationships of various kinds (Corman & Luxton 2007; Kershaw 2005). The women in our study indicated such an emotional and time-consuming investment in their children, supporting them, for example, in their schoolwork, and as they settled into a new school system and made friends. Our study suggests husbands also drew on the emotional capital of their wives, who supported them as they struggled to find work and to re-establish a valued self and social identity following deskilling and downward social mobility.

In this chapter we study the processes by which families enact various forms of cultural, social, economic, symbolic and emotional capital as they negotiate the local labour market. In studying families over time, we can begin to outline the dynamic processes of developing and deploying different forms of capital in an attempt to acquire attributes recognised as valuable 'human capital' in the local labour market, while specifying how these activities are enacted as part of the process of migration that contributes to social and economic integration. In particular, we explore how women's care and support activities at home and in the community and their labour market participation were significant in shaping the pathways of families as they sought economic and social integration.

## 6.4 Research methods

This chapter draws on interviews from a five-year longitudinal interview study (1997-2002) with members of 25 immigrant households from a variety of source countries, living in two neighbourhoods of Greater Vancouver, a major destination in Canada for immigrants. In East Vancouver, an inner city neighbourhood and traditional reception area for new immigrants, the fourteen households interviewed were from Bolivia, El Salvador, Hong Kong, India, Peru, the Philippines, Somalia, Uganda and Vietnam. In Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and Port Moody, an outer suburban region known as the Tri-Cities, we interviewed members of eleven households from Brazil, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Korea, Japan, Poland and the former Yugoslavia. Various issues related to immigrant settlement were raised in the interviews, including housing, employment, family and community life and children's schooling. Here we focus on

data related to reskilling and gaining access to employment although, as we discuss, these activities cannot readily be separated out from domestic and community life. Indeed, as we will argue, a range of activities are involved in the development of multiple capitals implicated in the enactment of the 'human capital' of neo-liberal theory.

While our analysis is based on the whole sample, we focus on two households, one in each neighbourhood. Both households consisted of a husband, wife and children. Not all families in our study lived as nuclear households; some were single-parent or extended family households. But these two households are typical of families in the sample coming to Canada with children – or hoping to have children – with the intention of making Canada their home. The Marcos family,<sup>3</sup> who had emigrated from the Philippines, had two preschool-age children and were living in rented accommodation in East Vancouver at the beginning of the study period. The Khalili family from Iran, who had two teenage children, were living in the Tri-Cities area, also in a rented apartment. These two households allow us to explore how gender is implicated in the activation of multiple capitals. The presence of children in the household also allows us to explore the deployment of emotional capital within household settlement strategies – given that emotional capital has been particularly associated with women's emotional resources in the domestic sphere and the raising of children (Reay 2004). From different source countries, with the men of the household both having similar professional qualifications and arriving in the year of the first interview, the two households also provided us with the opportunity to observe similarities and variations in strategies that could give us insight into the complexity of capital transformation processes. The interview team interviewed both adults in the Marcos household, Margerete and Jose, and in the Khalili family, Mania, her husband, Majid, and their teenage daughter and son. All had strong English-speaking skills. Jose Marcos was a professional engineer, while Margarete had experience as a senior clerical worker in the Philippines though did not have a post-secondary education. Majid was also a professional engineer, his degree completed in the US and his previous employment included work experience in Europe and Iran. Mania had been a high school English teacher in Iran, and had a university degree. Over the period of the study, their children attended a local high school with a strong academic reputation.

## **6.5 Family households, strategies of reskilling and the gendering of capitals**

Bourdieu's theory of capitals was directed towards understanding the generation and maintenance of class distinctions primarily through processes of reproduction. Immigration of skilled workers, on the other hand,

potentially threatens the accumulation and stability of forms of capitals; in fact, immigration research in Canada suggests that downward occupational mobility is common.<sup>4</sup> Our research shows the declines or 'interruptions' of many forms of capital throughout the process of immigration. Arriving in Canada with a history of a particular manifestation of capitals – recognised in the points system of immigration policy – neither main applicant in our two households found the 'human capital' developed in their countries of origin transferable across national boundaries. Although the educational credentials of the main applicant of each family were necessary for entering Canada through the points system, Canadian employers appeared unwilling to acknowledge the value of their degrees or prior work experience. In both households, adult members found their capitals devalued and, additionally over time, the economic capital they brought with them depleted. Efforts to get prior qualifications and experience recognised within Canada floundered in the face of professional associations' protectionism and employer indifference. The only jobs available were in low-wage sectors. Other multiple strategies were followed, often simultaneously, to reskill. Like members of other households in this study, all adults in the two households discussed here pursued one or more educational avenues at different points in time, including: 1) courses designed to introduce immigrants to local labour expectations and employment practices, such as writing resumes and interviewing strategies; 2) English-as-a-second-language (ESL) courses for those who needed to improve English fluency; and (3) occupationally specific courses and diploma programmes that might provide specific 'Canadian credentials'.

As a response to devaluation, such reskilling was a priority for the adult members of the households, but this was not just a matter of gaining another qualification. They soon learned that employment practices in Canada require specific forms of cultural capital they did not possess. They had to develop new forms of capital recognisable in the local context in order to find work in the Vancouver area. As argued elsewhere, employers' demands for 'Canadian work experience' and 'Canadian educational credentials' are forms of cultural capital central to negotiating the labour market (Bauder 2003, 2005). Other forms of more embodied cultural capital were also important, including linguistic capital (English fluency with an 'appropriate' accent),<sup>5</sup> and knowledge of local employment practices (interview protocols, 'appropriate' dress, demeanour, assertiveness, etc.). In addition, social capital, in the form of social networks, was critical to locating potential jobs and other forms of support; economic capital provided the much-needed resources to enable household members to reskill and retool; and emotional capital was essential to providing emotional support as well as the personal resilience, energy and fortitude that made it possible to undertake the long and difficult process of reskilling. For most households, then, the early years of settlement were devoted to

devising strategies to develop these multiple forms of capital that could be transformed into locally valued forms of 'human capital' recognised by Canadian employers.

Reskilling strategies were also dependent on the development and deployment of economic capital in relation to the job situation of other family members, collective financial security, child-care needs and career goals. In households with less economic capital than others, family members had to alternate reskilling opportunities to ensure adequate income to support the household. The continued financial viability of the household was always a prerequisite for any individual member to pursue further education. Pursuing reskilling strategies was made complicated by the often precarious nature and low wages of the employment available to immigrants, making it more difficult to develop the economic capital necessary for reskilling. Individual strategies of reskilling were always intertwined with broader household goals. Furthermore, the generation and deployment of various forms of capital was gendered in specific ways.

We turn now to the Marcos and the Khalili households to explore in more detail this gender dimension of the interweaving of capitals. We pay particular attention to emotional capital to evaluate its usefulness in broadening understanding of women's contribution to immigrant settlement processes. In addition, we suggest, the dichotomy between private and public spheres, long critiqued by feminist scholars (Barrett 1980; Pupo & Duffy 2007), is further challenged through exploring the workings of emotional capital in relation to the labour market. Emotional capital provided supportive underpinnings in the quest to achieve economic capital, as well as access to social capital that might lead to job opportunities. A longitudinal perspective allows us to examine the process of capital generation and transformation, including the interruptions and depletions as well as attempts to rebuild different forms of capital. Our focus is on the two women of the households, Margarete Marcos and Mania Khalili as they engage particularly with the 'invisible' activities of capital generation.

## **6.6 The Marcos and the Khalili households: Capital accumulations and transformations**

### *A promise of a better future*

Like other families with children, both the Marcos and the Khalili families expressed their decision to emigrate in terms of creating a better life for their children (this primary aim, amongst a complex of factors affecting the decision to migrate, is also noted by Banfi and Boccagni in this volume). They saw Canada as a country where children were likely to have a 'good life', one that included a high standard of education, employment oppor-



tunities and a secure political environment. Political and economic insecurities in the Philippines and Iran, respectively, had motivated the decision to leave their home countries, while the points system held forth a promise that the two men would be welcome workers in a land of opportunity. In their home countries, Jose and Majid had symbolic capital, manifested in the prestige of professional qualifications, good jobs and with English language skills that signalled their potential ability to cross international borders. This capital was tightly interwoven with their cultural and economic capital, both being further enhanced by their wives' abilities and employment. Margarete Marcos was in senior clerical work, although without a post-secondary education, and Mania Khalili held a university degree and was employed as an English language teacher.

Both households would have been in good positions to transmit cultural capital to their children – critical to their success as adults – had the economic and political climate of their countries been more favourable. Finding they were unable to transform their cultural capital into economic capital upon arriving in Canada, and without established social networks to help gain access to either of these, the households also lost the symbolic capital they had previously enjoyed in the public sphere of paid employment and community standing. Unable to invest in housing, both families lived in rented accommodation – the Marcos family in a neighbourhood well used to the arrival of non-white immigrants, and the Khalili family in a modest apartment block in an outer, primarily white, family-oriented suburban area. Neither household complained of racism, though neither were they mixing with the white 'host' population when first interviewed. Margarete and Jose had sought out other immigrants from the Philippines, particularly through a church. Meanwhile, Mania, like other women in the study who were living in the Tri-Cities, found making friends in the community difficult. With only a rudimentary knowledge of Canada, gained in the process of applying to immigrate and from images of North American life portrayed on television, both women could not readily transmit to their children cultural capital applicable to Canadian cultural, social and educational institutions.

On the other hand, the emotional labour of care, concern, attention, love, affection and expenditure of time was something Margarete and Mania did bestow in their localised daily practices. As noted, such emotional labour tends to be highly gendered, and primarily the province of women, particularly in societies with strong public and private divisions (Corman & Luxton 2005; Kershaw 2005). Although emotional labour is most often noted in the relationship between mothers and their children, the jointly devised reskilling and employment strategies between husbands and wives suggest the women had a considerable 'burden' of emotional labour in supporting both children and husbands. This was particularly so in Mania's case where teenaged children were settling into

an unfamiliar school system and Majid had little success in matching his skills to his employment and few avenues to reskill. In the next section we elaborate on this interweaving of emotional capital with other capitals, as the families re-oriented their approaches to generating economic capital.

#### 6.6.1 *Employment strategies, children's futures and women's deployment and generation of capitals*

In the absence of established social networks, both households set about forging social relationships soon after arrival. These initial networks (a form of social capital) were critical to the first jobs that Jose and Majid found. They also depended on the social geography of the city. Jose and Margarete in East Vancouver actively sought new contacts and friendships in an area where there was some institutional depth of the Filipino community, in the form of a Filipino church, as well as local services and shops run by other immigrants from the Philippines. Jose found his early jobs, unrelated to engineering, through notices in shops and via a friend. In the case of Majid and Mania, they were settling in a neighbourhood without a concentration of Iranians, but, from the beginning, were still linked in with other immigrants from Iran. A relative of Majid's found them rented accommodation in an apartment block where there lived other Iranian professionals, who in a common pattern for recent immigrants, had also not found work in their fields. Through this network and in response to being unable to find engineering work, Majid took a cashier job at a local gas station, working with other Iranians who had been engineers in Iran. In both Jose's and Majid's cases, this locally based social capital, in the form of new, co-ethnic networks, gained them access only to low-skill, low-wage sector work. Neither did these jobs give them the experience that local employers wanted for engineering work, failing to transform their Filipino and Iranian cultural capital into the Canadian labour market. Without reskilling, precarious, low-wage labour was hard to escape. So long as most links in their networks were in a similar situation – underemployed foreign-trained professionals – the social capital of these networks could not be transformed into more desired forms of economic capital. Even after gaining experience in the gas station over time, Majid was unsuccessful in his bid to become a manager; the reason cited was that he had not been in Canada long enough.

Both men sought to reskill by taking an Autocad course, a software program with some parallel features to engineering. Jose went further in taking a British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) diploma programme to become a civil engineer technologist. In these ways, both Jose and Majid generated new forms of cultural capital, attaining locally recognised educational credentials and knowledge of labour market

practices. However, neither reskilled to their previous level of professional training. How this newly acquired cultural capital was transformed into economic capital is discussed in a later section; here we look at how reskilling was enabled and Margerete's and Mania's participation in this process of cultural capital generation.

Like their husbands, Margerete and Mania experienced downward occupational mobility. Margerete worked in a series of temporary data entry jobs below her clerical training while Jose reskilled. Mania had wanted to reskill herself, but was denied the opportunity of retraining as a teacher since she did not have a complete set of education certificates going back to high school and was unable to retrieve them from Iran. This also proved to be a barrier to her second choice of pursuing social work training. In both households, the husbands' reskilling and search for career opportunities was put first. While such a choice involves a number of factors likely to vary within families, in the practice of such choices we see women's generation and deployment of cultural, social and emotional capital as important dimensions of support in their husbands' search for jobs commensurate to their training. While the men had lost their symbolic capital in the public sphere, we could see the family household strategies, perhaps, as preserving something of a husband's symbolic capital (authority, prestige) in the domestic sphere.

In the Marcos family, soon after their arrival, Jose's low wages precipitated Margarete's finding a job. The intertwining of jobs, to secure sufficient income (economic capital) for Jose's reskilling and to provide for the family, required flexible care arrangements. The family obtained subsidised child-care, which made it possible for both parents to work – although in low-wage sectors of employment. This subsidy was withdrawn, however, as their income increased. Furthermore, their insecure jobs led to periods of unemployment. In one period of unemployment, when she was able to benefit from employment insurance payments, Margarete stayed at home for a year with their children and Jose attended further education full time. Here we have an instance of the indirect transformation of one spouse's emotional capital into the other spouse's cultural capital, with the potential of this cultural capital being transformed into economic capital. When both were employed again, they used a babysitter until grandparents visited for a year and took over the emotional and practical labour of child-care, thus allowing Jose and Margarete to build their economic capital.

The Khalili's strategy was different, though contained similar elements of capital generation and transformation. Majid maintained his employment at the gas station and Mania took primary responsibility of the care and concern for the children, particularly in the case of the daughter whom she would accompany to the library after regular school hours, promoting her daughter's education and local cultural capital. In the absence of an

extended family network, Mania bore the brunt of providing emotional and social support for her husband and children. Her children, in the final interview, acknowledged their mother as the primary support for the family in the first years of settlement. She helped them adjust to school and provided emotional support to her husband throughout the disappointments he had encountered. They had talked of returning to Iran, but for the sake of their children's futures and in the context of Iran's political climate, had decided to stay for at least the foreseeable future. Mania was also developing social and cultural capital through work in the community by taking her capacity of 'care and concern' for others into community work. Emotional capital, closely tied to social capital (Nowotny 1981) and generally associated with family and friendships, we suggest, may also be deployed in the 'public' sphere in the domain of volunteer work. This example indicates a transformation of emotional capital into cultural capital. Mania's emotional labour of 'mothering', together with her developing cultural capital about how 'to go on' in Canada, was directly used in working with more recent Iranian women immigrants in a community programme. Here Mania was able to use her Iranian place-based cultural capital in her work with the women, work that also constituted the valuable local cultural capital of 'Canadian experience'. She used her English skills in translation work for the women, and her teaching experience to give them English lessons. Through these sets of work skills, including labour that involved care and concern for others, we see Mania interweaving and generating cultural, social and emotional capital and, in doing this, transforming them into economic capital to help provide for the family household. Interestingly, Mania's growing social and cultural capital was deployed in helping new Iranian immigrants to the Tri-Cities; the Khalili household was now one with cultural capital to bestow – providing information on resources, schools and other avenues that might be helpful in the first years of settlement.

In the next section, we see how these emerging capitals were consolidated, together with their variable utility across gender and generation.

### 6.6.2 *Consolidations, changing course and gender*

By the fifth year of the study, both the Marcos and the Khalili families had generated social, cultural and economic capital. Emotional capital was implicated in how these capitals interwove and could be transformed. However, it is crucial to note that in the processes of capital transformations, wider economic, political and social relations were also at play and set a context of constraint or enablement. None of the adults had been able to transfer their pre-immigration skill levels to the Canadian labour market, nor was their symbolic capital in the public sphere restored in the context of wider Canadian society. The reskilling strategies enacted by

household members were shaped by a precarious and deeply polarised labour market as well as the gendered nature of emotional capital in reskilling processes. The limitations of local social networks in providing convertible social capital was, in some instances, ameliorated by a wider international social network set within international migration processes in a global context. In the cases of both the Marcos and the Khalili families, familial and professional networks in the United States had become part of the process of attempts to acquire the economic capital that would enable the two families to make a new home that was also socially viable from their perspectives. In the potential strategy of crossing another international border, social capital took on heightened value.

In the final interview of the study, we heard that both the Marcos and the Khalili families were contemplating moves to the US after continued lack of success in finding employment in Greater Vancouver that was commensurate to their training and skills. Relatives in California had been urging Jose to come for some time, and two years after the last interview the family moved there. Their newly acquired Canadian citizenship gave them access to a work visa in the US, and Jose found employment in his field of civil engineering. Margerete had been less keen to move, as she had developed considerable social and cultural capital in the local context and a sense of belonging through friendship networks.

Majid and Mania had also considered a move to California, again spurred on by relatives and friends. Three years after arriving in Canada, Majid actively pursued a job there, but difficulties in getting a visa in a timely manner and health problems of the anticipated employer led to the loss of this opportunity. Majid continued having difficulty getting a good job in Vancouver, although by the end of the study he had found an engineering-related job through his Autocad training. This, however, was still at a much lower level than his former job in Iran. Like Margerete, Mania had been reluctant to move to the US. Although Mania was bored after having enjoyed her successful career in Iran, she had built up local friendships, mainly with other immigrants, and co-ethnic friendships in other neighbourhoods, and felt reasonably content with their neighbourhood and children's schools. She was contributing to the community, as well as providing emotional support for her family. She was the key source of emotional and social capital, as well as a contributor of economic capital for the household, and it was the development of these interrelated multiple capitals that provided the basis for the children to do well. Yet, from the perspective of 'human capital' theory, Mania's contributions are considered marginal at best and her husband's contributions in the labour market take precedence.

As with other family households in the study, children's futures were an important component of family strategies. Much of the emotional capital that women develop and deploy is connected to helping other

family members, particularly children, develop their own cultural capital that can then be transformed into economic capital in the labour market. The Marcos children were still pre-school age or just starting school by the end of the study, but the good education and employment opportunities were about to come to fruition for the Khalili children. Certainly, the household's economic goals were intertwined with their children's achievements in Canada. The son, coming to Canada at a young age, was enjoying school and had made many friends. The daughter, more home-oriented, was achieving well at school and had various opportunities she could pursue. Children raised and educated in Canada would never face the barriers their parents did, with employment being linked to demands for a Canadian education and Canadian experience. The children had acquired cultural capital with local value and recognition. Majid was struck by the contrast between his children's opportunities in Canada and his own, lamenting the difficulty he was still experiencing in securing a job that would bring him social standing. Like most families in the study, Majid and Mania were resigned to the fact that the better life they sought in emigrating to Canada, if attainable, would rest with their children.

Both Margarete and Mania had worked hard to develop social capital that would be useful not only to themselves, but for other members of their families. Like many other women in the study, each had made friends and found work through settlement service NGOs, community centres and their local schools. In building and maintaining community relationships (social capital), either in the local geographical community or broader ethnic-based community, the women also could find important 'inside' information (or cultural capital) and job leads for their spouses. Further, the type of employment some women engaged in, such as with non-profit organisations serving other immigrants, in itself is associated with attributes of 'care and concern'. Such work experience provided the women with the 'Canadian experience' valued by employers, and was hence a direct transformation of emotional capital into economic capital. The women's accounts of their family and work experiences since being in Canada showed that gender was a significant dimension of emotional capital intimately tied to a family's struggle for economic and social 'success' in Canada. Women's 'emotionally laden' skills and assets were the basis of freeing other members of the family unit to develop their social and cultural capital (especially in the case of the children) as well as economic capital (for example, taking less desirable employment to enable a spouse's reskilling and job search). It was difficult for parents, for instance, to retrain or upgrade their credentials when they needed income for housing, living costs, tuition fees and child-care costs. These were choices households made about whose cultural capital they could afford to invest in at a given time. Due to uphill battles in finding secure employment, parents tended to forgo opportunities in Canada for themselves in

order to provide for their children. The mothers, in particular, bore the brunt of diminished opportunities, both in the household and outside it. They were generally more responsible for raising the children, with all the emotional supports and development of social capital that entailed, and accommodated their husbands' employment strategies while placing their own reskilling on hold. In sum, strategies of settlement and reskilling were enacted in gendered ways that made women central actors in these processes and yet made them largely invisible in 'human capital' narratives and the public policies they engender.

## 6.7 Conclusion

This chapter problematises human capital discourses that underlie Canadian immigration policies and privilege 'skilled' independent immigrants while casting other family members as a burden. Firmly rooted in a neo-liberal paradigm of autonomous self-sufficient actors, human capital discourse ignores how immigrants are embedded in family households that provide the supports for individuals to negotiate a precarious labour market and forge new spaces of belonging. Human capital theory is place-, race- and gender-blind: adherents assume that educational credentials, skills and work experience transfer across national boundaries in a predictable fashion unmarked by larger power relations within the labour market and broader society. As our research illustrates, however, immigrants to Canada routinely find the skills, educational credentials and work experience developed in their countries of origin – the 'human capital' on which their immigration applications were accepted – has little or no value in the Canadian labour market.

This chapter argues that feminist revisions of Bourdieu's theory of interrelated multiple capitals provide a more promising theoretical point of departure to explain the gap between immigrants' 'human capital' on paper and in the local Vancouver context. It also sheds light on the complex, multifaceted and gendered processes of reskilling and mutual support that family households engage in. The family households in our study worked hard to develop new cultural capital – doing volunteer work or co-op placements to gain 'Canadian experience' and following a variety of courses and programmes to become oriented with local employment practices and attain Canadian educational credentials – critical to gaining a foothold in the Vancouver labour market. Family households forged new social networks in the local context, depending on specific neighbourhoods, developing new forms of social capital critical to job-seeking and processes of belonging in Vancouver, while drawing on pre-existing networks at the same time. In all family households in our study, and exemplified in the two families highlighted in this chapter, mutual caring,

support and solidarity – or the development and deployment of emotional capital – was central to settlement and to job-seeking, specifically. Household members developed long-term family strategies for reskilling that took into account the overall financial needs of the household, employment options of various individual members and child-care needs, and made choices about whose cultural capital could be invested in at specific points in time. Hence, a broad range of cultural, social and emotional capitals were developed and enacted by family households that were transformed over time into varying levels of economic capital, economic capital that, in turn, underpinned options for further reskilling.

The gendered nature of these processes constitutes a key finding of our study. The unfolding of gendered household strategies and the component transformations of capital reveals how the domestic sphere is closely interwoven with labour market activities. Far from viewing family members attached to independent immigrants as economically ‘unproductive’ and ‘problematic’, we need to acknowledge that migration is an interdependent family strategy in which household members develop family-based practices and goals (see also Gonzalez-Ferrer this volume). The reshaping of the meaning of the family and constituent roles and responsibilities are similarly noted in Bonizzoni and Varrel (this volume). As we have illustrated, gender dynamics within households and overall economic resources shape decisions about who will seek educational opportunities and of what kind. Except where family economic capital was more plentiful, wives routinely placed their reskilling aspirations as secondary to their husbands’. In struggling against labour market obstacles, the women typically did not follow their own career opportunities. Rather, the women took part-time or volunteer work to provide the flexible labour that supported the social and economic goals of the family unit. Moreover, the development of social and emotional capital within family households was clearly gendered, with women forging broader community-based social networks, often linked to their children’s schooling and other community activities, both paid and volunteer, that aided themselves and other family members in job searches and developing a sense of belonging. Women’s emotional capital was perhaps even more central to sustaining family households through the long and difficult processes of reskilling, always with an eye to situating their children’s and husbands’ future prospects more than their own. As wives and mothers, they were the most active in providing the emotional investment that held their households together and developed solidarity as a unit. In our study, the emotional work of women in relation to making ‘home’ for the family unit in this way can be seen as integral to the building and transformation of other forms of capitals – cultural, economic and social. Women as flexible labour in the household, combining work in the home and in building new friendships and neighbourhood relationships in the local community with



paid and volunteer employment, were accumulating social and cultural capital that had the potential to be transformed into economic capital. Women are therefore central to the economic and social integration of other family members (including husbands who are typically earmarked as the independent immigrant) in ways that often simultaneously reinforced their own position of marginalisation.

As a theory of multiple interrelated capitals that collectively transform and/or reproduce relations of privilege and social inequality, we suggest that extending Bourdieu's approach to the context of immigration in Canada is particularly useful. Although he did not address issues of immigration or racialisation, *per se*, our study shows that using Bourdieu to problematise human capital discourse highlights how place-based notions of 'human capital' are central to reproducing social inequality in Canada. Systemic preferences for 'made in Canada' cultural capital is an effective way of reproducing economic privilege for the Canadian-born in a period of high levels of immigration and rapid changes in ethnic and racialised diversity in urban centres; in 2006, for example, the population of Greater Vancouver was 40 per cent immigrant and nearly 42 per cent of residents identified as people of colour (Statistics Canada 2007, 2008). The differential recognition of educational credentials, skills and experience as legitimate 'human capital' in this context should be understood as part of a process of 'othering' new immigrants; it puts newcomers 'in their place' at the bottom of the labour market where they must begin the process of developing their cultural, social and economic capital all over again in an effort to find better jobs more commensurate with their prior training. By contrast, to examine Canadian immigration through the lens of 'human capital' is to make these processes of racialisation, gendering and power invisible. Moreover, it mistakenly asserts that the problems related to poor economic integration of immigrants are related to inadequacies of the immigrants themselves and to the 'unproductive' family members they bring with them.

## Notes

- 1 For example, children must meet several conditions, including being 'under age 22 and unmarried or not in a common-law relationship' (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2007: 50). Parents of the migrating family and other family members are unable to accompany the applicant and can only be sponsored later under onerous and cumbersome conditions to join the family (McLaren & Black 2005).
- 2 Much of this research has been conducted by researchers at Statistics Canada (e.g. Aydemir & Skuterud 2004; Frenette & Morissette 2005; Ostrovsky 2008; Picot & Hou 2003; Picot & Sweetman 2005). The underemployment of skilled immigrants has become so widely reported that it recently became a federal election issue that

led to national commitment to establish a 'foreign-credentialing office' (see Creese & Wiebe 2009).

3 All names are pseudonyms.

4 For examples of such research, see references given in note 2.

5 Bourdieu (1977) defines 'linguistic capital' as an embodied form of cultural capital that rests less on traditional notions of fluency and grammar than on power – i.e. the 'right' to speak and be heard. Accents, in particular, are an 'index of authority' that shapes the ability to be heard. Elsewhere, we have discussed how 'local accents' remain a form of cultural capital enabled in the labour market that most immigrants find difficult, if not impossible, to acquire. Indeed, in some contexts – for example, among black immigrants from Commonwealth Africa – embodied accents are a proxy for race and discrimination against 'African English accents' can be a form of systemic racism (Creese 2007; Creese & Wiebe 2009).

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## **7 The transmission of labour commitment within families of migrant entrepreneurs in France and Spain**

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### **7.1 Introduction**

Studies into 'family businesses' have traditionally revealed the need to link home and business environments (Finch & Mason 1993), highlighting the interaction between family relations and the development of small businesses that require capital and family labour both at their initial stages and in order to survive (Baines & Wheelock 1998; Wheelock & Baines 1998). Indeed, certain authors go as far as to speak of a 'family embeddedness perspective' (Aldrich & Cliff 2003) (see review of this literature by Ram, Sanghera, Abbas, Barlow & Jones 2000; Jones & Ram 2007).

In turn, studies into 'ethnic businesses' have also acknowledged the role of the family as a kind of social capital, within the framework of the ethnic resources that migrants usually resort to when setting up a business. For example, Raijman and Tienda (2003) highlight the way in which Koreans in Chicago have a far greater tendency to open up a business than their Mexican counterparts, due to the differences in access to capital via ethnic and family sources. As Ram et al. (2001) state, most of the literature addressing the issue of the family within the framework of ethnic businesses stresses the fact that cultural differences impact on the business dynamics. Consequently, certain immigrant communities appear to benefit from greater facilities when setting up and maintaining businesses, as a result of solidarity, family ideologies or cultures that promote business activity, as in the case of South Asians (Boissevain & Grotenberg 1987; Boyd 1990; Kibria 1994; Mingione 1999; Sanders & Nee 1996; Werbner in Ram et al. 2001).

However, few studies have addressed the issue of ethnic business within the framework of immigrant household dynamics (Kibria 1994; Sanders & Nee 1996; Ram et al. 2000; Ram et al. 2001; Sanghera 2002). And even fewer have analysed the role of the second generation within family and business relations (Apitzsch 2005; Peace & Hulme 1994; Song 1997, 1999; Ram et al. 2001; Sanghera 2002). Likewise, the analysis of transnational households, from the perspective of family and business strategies, including intergenerational and gender perspectives, has received scant attention.

As pointed out by Catarino and Morokvasic (2005), the issue of

transnational households is often associated in the literature with immigrant men sending remittances to their family left behind abroad, whilst their female counterparts are mainly relegated to the reproductive role or their function as transnational mothers within the so-called global care chain. Other studies still confine transnational immigrant women to family issues, depicting them as persons developing 'maternal strategies', which consist of migrating not only on their own, but also with their children in order to protect them from the dangers they are exposed to in their home countries (Rotkirch 2005). With few exceptions (Parreñas 2001; Oso 2008), the economic contribution and commitment of transnational female-headed households is often marginalised, and their possible involvement in entrepreneurship overlooked. The economic/non-economic nature of exchanges lying within transnational families headed by immigrant women is only very rarely explored. Furthermore, literature on the transnational involvement of the second generation is limited to cultural aspects rather than economic ones. Alternatively, it points to their involvement in professional transnational activities compared with first-generation immigrants (Rusinovic 2008), and seldom considers the commitment of 'transnational children' within their parents' entrepreneurial activities.

The objective of this chapter is to shed light on the transmission of labour commitment within families of migrant entrepreneurs in France and Spain.<sup>1</sup> We aim to examine the factors hindering or facilitating children's commitment, as well as its nature (economic/non-economic). Our research is limited to migrant entrepreneurs and their families, and does not include a comparison with the local population. We intend to highlight several characteristics stemming from the immigration experience. We will therefore define whether family configuration related to the type of migration, as well as the possible transnational dimension of family social mobility projects, affects the nature of exchanges and commitments in the respective businesses.

Our studies, based on the biographical approach, investigated families of ethnic entrepreneurs from an intergenerational and intra-generational perspective.<sup>2</sup> This methodological approach is innovative; in the field of migration studies, research into families has consisted mainly of reporting either on relations between couples (bicultural couples, polygamy and forced weddings) or intergenerational relations (socialisation, cultural transmission and social mobility), seldom combining an intergenerational and intragenerational perspective. Besides, general research into the family or that focusing specifically on immigrant populations has often been limited to the study of just one of its members. Very few studies offer numerous or diverse accounts or narratives, failing to contrast the perceptions of various family members by interviewing several members of the same family. Those that have done so focused mainly on interviews

with adult children, offering intragenerationally divergent accounts – namely between siblings – relegating intergenerational accounts to a secondary level (Song 1998, 1999). Very few have explored relations between couples and generations, with sibling relations occupying only a very minor role (Aquilino 1999).<sup>3</sup>

We will begin by presenting some theoretical reflections related to the types of exchange. Secondly, we will discuss the nature of relationships and exchanges/circulation of goods and services in family businesses, and more particularly pose the question as to whether these are economic or non-economic. We will then provide some examples of gift/counter-gifts or economic exchanges within family businesses. Following from this, we will attempt to determine more precisely whether certain aspects of immigration affect the nature of exchanges<sup>4</sup> and commitments in the respective businesses. Finally, the chapter assesses the impact of children's labour and their sense of ethnic belonging. The conclusions identify various factors that influence the sense of indebtedness and commitment felt by the children of immigrant entrepreneurs.

## **7.2 The nature of exchange and a space for economic and non-economic relations in family businesses**

The 'shift away from [...] "non-market" work in the advanced economies and towards work conducted under market-based relations' is seen as being so widespread that some scholars predict the end of non-market relations and activities (Williams 2004: 438). But non-market relations still exist, not only as remnants of traditional societies. One option, suggests Williams (2004: 444), has been to view them as 'resistance to marketization' and a source of 'human agency'.

The circulation of goods and services in families is governed by rules that differ from market logic or state logic. In his book *Le Don, la dette et l'identité: Homos donator versus homo oeconomicus*, Godbout (2000) claims that a) the market's prevailing characteristic is the principle of equivalence and profit in exchange relations, whereas b) the state's characteristics are authority, law, the quest for equality and justice and c) social networks such as the family are dominated by the notions of gift and debt. Godbout posits that in the market, there is no obligation between two partners except to honour the market contract. Conversely, in a family, each member is embedded in various interrelated relations and obligations.

As literature has shown, the family business acts as a continuum between the spheres of production and reproduction, where personal relations are a mixture of family and business matters (Baines & Wheelock 1998; Wheelock & Baines 1998). In some cases, the involvement of family members in the business can be seen as a gift, as in Mauss' perspective.

For Mauss, a gift is any object or service, utilitarian or superfluous, transacted as part of social relations, as distinct from more purely monetary or material relations. This departs from conventional usage in that it includes labour, which can be a gift (just as it can be a commodity), although it is not normally a present. (Carrier 1991: 122)<sup>5</sup>

Godbout asserts that the gift serves to produce and reproduce social relations and, together with Caillé, offers the following definition that we have translated into English: 'we qualify the gift as the provision of goods or services, with no guarantee of being paid back, in order to create, sustain or recreate social relations among people' (Godbout & Caillé 1991: 32; Caillé 2005). This does not necessarily mean that people do not expect anything in return when they give something, but instead that this payback act is uncertain. From Godbout's perspective, one has to understand the meaning of the gift for people. Not only goods and services are provisioned, but they also involve the circulation of feelings such as hate and love (Godbout 2000).

In specifying the characteristics of family members' commitment and labour in family businesses, we have attempted in our research to answer questions such as: What is the basis for family members' commitment to the ethnic family business? What is the nature of this commitment? Are relations between business family members embedded in gift and counter-gift processes? How do family members perceive their commitment? Do family members present their commitment and labour as given freely or as part of a debt that must be repaid? Is there a perceived growing influence of the economy in family business relations? Are relations between business family members governed by notions of interest? Of justice and equality? Of gift and debt?

If these questions are applicable to a group of entrepreneur families, our analysis would be characterised by an attempt to identify the impact of migration on the family dynamics of small entrepreneurs, also seen from the transnational perspective. We therefore pose the question as to how migration and transnational relationships may influence family, as well as business relations and labour commitment among children. An additional factor for consideration is the way in which the children's commitment may shape ethnicity.

### **7.3 Examples of exchanges in family businesses: From non-economic to market relations**

Based on data obtained from our field-work, we have managed to identify several types of exchange within the framework of immigrant en-



trepreneur families, dominated to a greater or lesser extent by non-economic or market relations. The intention is not to offer an exhaustive list, but instead to shed some light on the variety of cases encountered.

### 7.3.1 *Debts and gifts*

Some children perceive or present their labour in the family business as a kind of 'counter-gift' in order to repay a 'gift': their parents incurred debts in order to pay for their migration and settlement; they made sacrifices for them; they financed their children's costly education, etc. In their narratives, children either mention the sense of obligation they feel to return a 'gift' or express that their involvement is of their own free will.

Gilda's case in France exemplifies the 'having to return a gift' type. She is the second of three children. Gilda always felt that she had received less affection and care than did her elder disabled sister and younger brother. In compensation, her parents financed her expensive private higher education, which has enabled Gilda to distinguish herself from her siblings. This 'privilege' is a source of conflict between the siblings, and for Gilda, one that requires a counter-gift. Faced with parental discourse regarding the equal treatment their children have received (in terms of what has been 'given' to them), but portrayed by her siblings as the most privileged child, Gilda felt that she had to repay this 'advantage'. Instead of her brother, she therefore worked at her mother's restaurant on weekends, while completing her higher education. She considers this to be compensation for the fact that her parents financed her studies. Our informant believes that work in her mother's restaurant has installed in her a sense of labour ethics and responsibility that her brother and sister do not share. Unlike her siblings, Gilda is proud of not having resorted to her parents' social capital in order to obtain a job. Gilda likewise openly criticises her sister who, despite being married with children, continues to rely on her mother, Flores, for help with the domestic chores and financial support. Helping out in the family business – 'having to return a gift' and feeling that she has repaid or inverted a debt – has finally had an empowering effect on Gilda, giving her a sense of self-esteem. Gilda, who wishes to become independent, assures us that unlike her brother and sister, she doesn't expect anything from her parents. This reveals that after having worked in the family business, she now seeks to loosen the ties binding her to her parents.

The sense of moral obligation towards their parents and of a gift/counter-gift relation can also be detected in the discourse of several children of Spanish migrant returnees.<sup>6</sup> Susana's parents returned from Germany with sufficient capital to set up a business, and they opened a tapas bar in A Coruña. The help of their eldest daughter proved essential, due to the lack of stability of this small enterprise. As our informant told

us, the catering business is highly dependent on its clientele, which varies considerably during the course of the year; some months are better than others. The help of sons and daughters at the busiest times allows the family to save on having to hire a third person, whom they would have to pay all year. In Susana's case, the opening of the bar coincided with the return and the start of a new migratory process. At the time, our twelve-year-old informant was old enough to help out with the family business. Her position in the family life cycle, as well as the situation in the migratory and business life cycles (the recent return and opening of the business), meant that she was directly involved in the success of the business. Her younger brother was less involved because he was still too young to take on the type of responsibilities assumed by his elder sister. Susana's parents never asked her directly to help out with the business, but she felt obliged to lend a hand when she realised the sacrifices her parents were making for their children.

... you see your parents working, and in the catering business this takes up loads of time; they've been working sixteen hours a day for the last fifteen years, and you either decide to lend a hand or get out of there because you can't bear to see it. They pay for your studies. So I decided to help out. You save on having to pay an employee at the busiest times [...] My parents never force me to help out, but they come out with the typical sermon: 'Where do you think the money comes from? We feed you, where do you think those trainers come from?'

Susana is highly aware of the sacrifices her parents made when they migrated to Germany, and the harsh conditions they were forced to live under. It's possible that this feeling of indebtedness is heightened by her parents' migratory experience. Our informant's narrative reveals the way in which parents also tend to blame their children – an attitude also perceived by Song (1999) – which, in turn, heightens the children's sense of commitment.

Susana combines this feeling of obligation with a discourse expressing how family responsibilities have limited some of the choices she has had to make in her life. She had to opt for a university degree course that she could take where her parents live, so as to continue helping out in the bar; in daily life, she had less leisure and free time than her friends due to the family business. She was unable to travel abroad to complete the academics she wished to pursue, for example, Erasmus grants, language skills acquisition, postgraduate studies. It would appear that being the eldest child also heightens the sense of responsibility towards the family, a sense that, according to our informant, is not shared by her brother.

My brother is the typical Spaniard: spoiled, materialistic, someone who lives his own life and wants everything done for him. He uses the business as an excuse for not studying; he says: 'I can't study because you make me work.' He helps out a bit, he washes the dishes, serves a couple of coffees, cleans up a bit and goes home. It's always me who's left to do most of the work.

Susana thought that her brother would eventually take over the responsibility she was forced to take on, but this sense of duty is not so strong in the youngest child of the family. As a result, Susana, even though she is currently in a work position that keeps with her qualifications, is unable to break the ties she has with the family business, and continues to work in her parents' tapas bar. The case of Beatriz and her mother, Elisa, clearly illustrates the existence of intergenerational debt and obligation chains (Bloch & Buisson 1991). Beatriz came to Galicia with her mother Elisa, at age sixteen. Elisa was the daughter of Galician emigrants. She was born in Buenos Aires, where she married and had two children, and worked in the offices of a pharmaceutical company. At age 38, her marriage broke down. This separation, combined with the severe economic crisis in Argentina, led her to migrate to Spain. She arrived in Galicia in the year 2000, accompanied by Beatriz. She worked in domestic service for four years until she was able to set up her own business, a bar-restaurant. Mother and daughter both took part in a shared migratory and business project. Elisa worked in domestic service until her daughter completed her secondary education. The fact that Elisa delayed setting up her business to enable her daughter to complete her studies constitutes a gift that generates a feeling of indebtedness in Beatriz. When Elisa then decided to set up a business, her daughter's involvement in the project for this new family business was essential. Whilst her mother was busy running the bar-restaurant, Beatriz worked in domestic service. Her salary provided a regular income for this family unit comprising mother and daughter. Beatriz also helped out with the business after work, thereby relinquishing the opportunity to find a job in keeping with her qualifications whilst the business got off the ground, a sacrifice constituting a gift for her mother. Her sense of obligation and duty towards her mother are clearly perceived from her discourse. In turn, her mother expresses a certain sense of regret that her daughter was forced to go out to work cleaning other people's homes. Yet they both employ the same argument: it was the mother who made the sacrifices whilst Beatriz was finishing her secondary education, and now it's the daughter's turn to make those sacrifices in order to keep the business going. By working in domestic service and thereby helping her mother, Beatriz is to some extent repaying her debt yet, in doing so, her mother also experiences feelings of indebtedness, as she is now, in part at least, financially dependent on her daughter.<sup>7</sup>

The case of Hua Zhou in France exemplifies the type of the gift as a sign of free will and as resistance to the marketisation of society and its threat to the family. Hua is the eldest of four children; she and her sisters were regrouped in France by their parents at an early age. Hua had to assume several responsibilities such as replacing her mother in the private sphere before the opening of the establishment, taking care of her siblings, whilst the parents worked and saved in order to be able to open their own shop. As her parents have limited French language skills, she also took on the role of intermediary and translator both before and after the business opened, as well as mediating between her parents and younger siblings who only speak French. In addition, she initially showed the highest degree of commitment to the family business, representing what Song (1999) refers to as 'an integral child'. Hua does not consider working for her parents an obligation, but rather a positive action for the well-being of her siblings and a way of creating bonds within the family. She perceives her 'help' as normal and not a 'proper job', although she does employ the word 'work' in her narrative (and more specifically when she denounced her siblings' laziness to stress the idea of labour). She emphasises the perversion of monetary relations throughout her discourse. She also denounces the perversion of capitalism in the Chinese migrant community, in general and, more recently, on Mainland China. An indication of her defence of non-economic family relations appears when she interprets the difference in the way Chinese children in China and Chinese children in migration are treated. In China, the single-child policy and lack of social security make children unique and cherished persons. In migration, having several children and being able to provide them with medical care has an impact on parents' use and misuse of children's labour or involvement (i.e. being more intensive and exploitative, thereby making it comparable to real work). In the latter scenario, children are considered as a kind of 'means' or 'merchandise'. It is capitalism, exploitation, consumerism and abuse in all of its forms that Hua violently criticises. In this perspective, children help out, but they should be rewarded by being afforded respect. Hua's expectations in compensation for her labour and commitment in the family business are her family's respect for her private life.

### 7.3.2 *Work in the business as a market relationship*

Other children perceive their contribution to the ethnic business as work performed within the framework of a market relationship and this can be a source of 'misunderstanding' or mismatch in reciprocal expectations between parents and children and with regard to the nature of exchange within families. Mr. Touzani worked for several years without a real salary in a French bakery; in exchange, he was given the bakery by the French proprietor. He wanted to reproduce this kind of exchange with his son,

Afif, who is the only child living with him in France, as his other children stayed behind in Morocco. In his eyes, his child's low-paid labour will be repaid later by the transmission of the business. Afif presently rejects this idea, as the profits generated by the business tend to be invested more in the social mobility of his siblings back in the country of origin than in his own in France. He would rather establish a business relationship within the enterprise, with the assignment of a regular substantial due salary or a sum of money that would enable him to build a house in Morocco. According to Lobet (2006), who has carried out research into the transfer of family businesses in Wallonia, if, as Mauss states, the gift must be received and passed on, the company that has been inherited must necessarily be handed down to the descendants. This gift to descendants is therefore reciprocal to the ascendant family members or the giver.<sup>8</sup> Afif appears to be prepared to refuse this gift, thereby breaking the chain of transfer for the family business.

#### **7.4 Intergenerational and intra-generational relationships, gender and family life cycle**

Another point for consideration is that children gradually modify their perception of their labour and commitment. Children may implicitly or explicitly accept or even defend the logic of offering their labour as a gift/counter-gift within the family business. At a certain age, however, they aspire to engage in a relationship in waged labour or continue their studies. Liu-Mei, Hua's sister, recounted: 'At the beginning, it was good because I adore being in the shop, customers are always friendly, as we were little girls, people always thought we were cute little darlings.' Her elder sister's narrative also gave the impression that Liu-Mei and her younger sister were having fun in the business. She says, 'At the beginning, they came to the takeaway really just to have some fun: I come, I eat a little, there are drinks everywhere; there are *nems* [referring to a type of spring roll] everywhere. So coming to the shop was more like a game, like tasting lots of different dishes...' Yet when Liu-Mei grew up, she felt the need to have external social relations and to work part time outside the family business, claiming that the business represented a kind of millstone around her neck ('*un boulet*').

Conflicts can occur between adolescents' personal and business lives, sometimes fuelled by deception, thereby altering their perception of commitment. Hua, who was the most committed child to the family business, left home and is now secretly living with her French boyfriend for fear that her father could never accept him. She nostalgically recalled how she and her father used to spend a lot of time together, how the unique ability to speak both Chinese and French made her a precious mediator

between the family and French society. Hua served as an adhesive for the family, like the very substance her father had once spoken about when patiently explaining how to use a tube of glue to paste things together. Glue provided an apt metaphor, thus, for the intimacy they shared – father and daughter had been ‘stuck’ together. Yet, Hua was forced to break the relationship after her father treated her disrespectfully, showing distrust and being overly controlling of her private life. Hua suggested that she would have liked to ‘glue’ their relationship back together again, though she also expressed bitterness at her father’s failure to achieve the ideal family social mobility: shifting from catering to restaurant ownership. Hua’s negative perception is also fuelled by the fact that her father has a drinking problem. She reproaches him for using the takeaway food as a means of financing his love of gambling, thereby commodifying family relations as well as his children’s sense of commitment.

Indeed, the interviews reveal several underlying or direct intergenerational conflicts, which may impact labour commitment and which appear for several reasons. Firstly, expectations may vary between parents and children regarding the latter’s sense of commitment to the family business. Whilst Gilda worked for several years in her mother’s restaurant to return a gift, Flores, her mother, expresses disappointment at the fact that her children – Gilda, in particular – fail to help her with the domestic chores and, like her husband, fails to provide emotional support, affection and social acknowledgement. Flores obtains the social acknowledgement she lacks in her private sphere from her restaurant, where her customers express their interest and where she has consolidated her role as *maitre*, imposing her rules of order and hygiene – something she fails to achieve in her domestic space. Flores would like Gilda, who currently works full time in her own field, to help out with the family business when she’s at home (carrying out tasks such as typing and printing out the restaurant menus). In Flores’ discourse, Gilda’s debt does not appear to have been fully repaid, or she fails to recognise her daughter’s help in the restaurant as a gift/counter-gift. Flores explains that ‘Up till now, Gilda was like a bottomless sack we simply poured money into. We don’t regret financing her studies, but I’d like her to realise that now she should help me out a bit, even though it’s just at home...’ On occasion, children perceive their commitment as work, unlike their parents, who see it as a gift (as in the case of the Touzani family).

Secondly, and as shown by Gilda’s and Flores’ examples, other more general disappointments appear, related to family exchanges and relations and associated with the business. Some mothers are saddened by their frustrated attempts at guaranteeing their children’s social mobility, blocked by events such as failure at school, as we will see later on in the case of the mother of Ricardo, Toni and Alejandra. Some children also refuse to become involved in the family business if it fails to meet their

expectations (in the case of Hua and her parents, the lack of opportunities to upgrade from takeaway food to a restaurant, where conflict arises between Hua and her father; an absence of the formal aspects of the business, as we will see in the case of Diana and her mother; or Toni and Ricardo's failure to value the type of business their mother runs). These narratives will further reveal the children's sense of disappointment when they fail to receive a counter-gift that meets their expectations (in the case of Hua, respect for her private life).

Intra-generational conflicts essentially arise from issues of inequality and injustice. For example, Gilda's brother and sister focus on the lack of equality in their parents' intergenerational redistribution (their narratives describe Gilda as being in a privileged financial position within the family, as their parents have financed her expensive studies). In order to repay this debt and silence this criticism, Gilda feels obliged to work in her mother's restaurant on weekends (a counter-gift for the gift of being able to simultaneously undertake expensive courses). In turn, Afif appears to resent being the only member of the family who has not been able to continue his studies (he is the only one that continues to work in his father's business – all his siblings are studying). Conflict between siblings also arises due to their varying degrees of commitment. Although this conflict is not limited to brother-sister relations, and despite the fact that we were unable to interview a sufficiently large number of sons, the daughters of immigrant entrepreneurs seem to show a greater sense of indebtedness and a higher level of commitment as well as a greater tendency to create non-mercantile relations within the framework of the family business. These daughters (Hua and Liu-Mei, Gilda, Susana and others whose narratives are not mentioned in the text), stress the lack of commitment shown by their brothers to the family business and their scant involvement in domestic chores. Another factor that can be determined from the study of immigrant entrepreneurs, which explains the degree of the sense of indebtedness, is birth order within the family. The elder children generally appear to develop a greater sense of commitment in comparison with their younger brothers and sisters.

Beyond the intra-family dynamics, characterised essentially by relations of solidarity and competition, which may lead to a mismatch in reciprocal expectations, it seems that migration, family type and the transnational issue also play a role in the nature of intergenerational exchange and children's sense of commitment to the family businesses. The type of exchange relations established within the scope of immigrant entrepreneur families can indeed be specifically affected by the nature of the family, within the framework of the migratory process (transnational, reunited, female-headed households or nuclear families, etc.), as well as by transnational practices. We will now go on to look at the influence these factors have.

## 7.5 Deciphering the effects of transnationality on children's commitment to family businesses

### 7.5.1 *The influence of transnational parenthood on the nature of children's commitment*

The specificity of the Spanish case – when compared with that of France – means that far more frequently than in France, we find businesses set up by female-headed households, by women who migrated alone, sometimes leaving behind their children and/or spouse in the country of origin. For instance, women from Latin America play a particularly relevant role, due to their position as pioneers within the migratory chain. For many of these women, the setting up of a business represents the only means of escape from the labour niches traditionally reserved in Spain for immigrant women, such as domestic service. In contrast to France, strongly feminised labour immigration flows are found in Spain. Dominican immigration has traditionally been predominantly female. In 1996, women made up 77 per cent of the total number of Dominicans in Spain. Peruvian and Colombian immigration has also traditionally had a strong female component (in 2001, 61 and 60 per cent of all Peruvian and Colombian immigrants in Spain, respectively, were women), although the data available in 2008 show a greater balance between the genders; 58 per cent of Dominicans were women, 51 per cent of Peruvians and 55 per cent of Colombians (INE, Padrón Municipal de Habitantes 1996-2008).<sup>9</sup> In the case of Ecuadorian immigrants, these data also reveal a greater balance between the genders in 2008 (51 per cent), although the exploitation of the data for valid work permits carried out in 1995 showed that 64 per cent of the total number of Ecuadorians in possession of a work permit were women (Oso 1998: 130).<sup>10</sup> In France, despite the predominance of women among some flows (East Asian, America and Oceania, new EU members (INSEE 2005)) as well as the growing migration of women migrating alone – or at least their higher visibility, as increasingly pointed out by literature (Moujoud 2007; Musso 2007) – female migration still seems to be predominantly family-based. This is true even among recent flows or those who have recently acquired legal status; women who are also less likely than their male counterparts to enter the labour market a certain number of years after migrating (Algava & Bèque 2008).<sup>11</sup> Differences related to migration characteristics between both countries are reflected in the characteristics of ethnic business entrepreneurs. In France, the economic migration of women on their own is still not as widespread as in Spain, and it is more likely that ethnic businesses will be family businesses run by a couple or a man. What are the characteristics of relations between children and mothers in families where women are the heads of the transnational household and also in charge of a business?



Parents' difficulty in exerting authority over their children or the existence of a gradual distancing in parent-child relations was signalled in the case of transnational parenthood – mostly motherhood: in other words, the case of mothers who migrate and leave their children behind in the care of domestic servants or female family members (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila 1997; Parreñas 2001). According to Parreñas (2004: 47), some of the children left behind in the Philippines resolve the emotional insecurity this causes them

by viewing migration as a sacrifice to be repaid by adult children. Children who believe that their migrant mothers are struggling for the sake of the family's collective mobility, rather than leaving to live the 'good life', are less likely to feel abandoned and more likely to accept their mothers' efforts to sustain close relationships from a distance.

The narratives of the Latin American families we interviewed in Spain indicate that the pattern detected in these studies in terms of distance in parent-child relations and the difficulties these mothers experience in exerting their authority tends to be repeated in transnational households headed by a woman who emigrates, leaving her children behind in the country of origin for several years.

To what extent could transnational distance impact children's sense of commitment to the business? How does the fact that some of these children are left behind in the country of origin for considerable periods of time and separated from parents affect labour commitment? Song's study (1999) reveals that children born in Hong Kong and separated from their family may experience a greater sense of commitment towards the family business than children born in Great Britain. However, and in contrast to the findings of Song, our field-work reveals that in the case of Latin American families, children born in the country of origin do not feel a stronger sense of commitment to the family business. Indeed, quite the opposite is true. Alejandra, divorced, with one daughter, arrived in Spain in 1989. She left her daughter behind in the care of the child's grandmother – a separation that lasted two years until Alejandra was able to bring her to Spain. Following several difficult experiences in live-in domestic service, and once she had obtained her 'papers' (i.e. a legal status), she managed to get by with various cleaning jobs paid by the hour and by setting up an informal home-based business making traditional Dominican cakes and pastries. The business went well, but she was unable to obtain the permits required by the local authority in order to open her own premises (a coffee and cake shop) and thereby formalise her business activity.

Raquel, separated, and a mother of three, arrived in Spain from the Dominican Republic in 1990. After working in paid employment in the

food and beverage industry for four years, and a year following the regrouping of her children, she managed to set up her own business, and today she is the owner of two bars.

The relationship between our interviewees and their children as well as the latter's involvement in the business is dictated, to a large extent, by the circumstances surrounding migration and 'transnational relations'. Both Alejandra and Raquel have lost authority over their offspring, who have been brought up by their grandmothers. In addition, their plans for the social mobility of their children have failed.

One of the reasons that led Alejandra to migrate to Spain was her hope that Diana, her only daughter, would be able to go to university. However, when Diana joined her mother in Spain, at the age of sixteen, she found it hard to integrate into the school system, as she was the only black person in the school. In addition to these difficulties, another factor influenced Diana's integration in Spain: getting used to living with her mother again. Although they had only been separated for two years, the mother's status as the head of the single-parent family had built up a barrier between mother and daughter prior to migration. Alejandra was forced to work outside the home all day in order to be able to support the family. This situation was then followed by her departure.

My mother was always working and only came home to sleep. The truth is that I really grew up with my grandmother. So when I arrived in Spain I not only had problems in adapting to the country, but also in getting used to living with my mother. At the time, I hardly knew her. When she was in one country and I was in another we used to get on really well. But when we're both in the same country, we clash a lot.

At the age of eighteen, and on completion of her secondary education, Diana decided to go back to the Dominican Republic, against the wishes of her mother. 'I think I went back because I didn't want to be with my mother,' she said. She met a boy whom she married just two weeks later, thereby putting an end to her mother's plans for the upward social mobility of her daughter through education. She went on to have two children. A financial crisis brought her back to Spain, forcing her to leave her husband and children behind and turning into a transnational wife and mother herself.

I hope that my children will be able to study here in Europe [...] before I got married, I would never have come back to Spain on my own. But when you've got children, you have to think about them. Just like my mother did, history is repeating itself. My mother came over here, and suffered terribly at having to leave me behind. Perhaps God is now making me pay for the things I did.

Diana is currently working as a paid employee in a telephone booth business. She doesn't want to work in her mother's business due to its precarious and informal nature. If her mother managed to open a coffee shop, then she would be willing to work there serving the customers. However, she has no desire to work informally decorating cakes, and on her days off she prefers to rest rather than help her mother with her cake business. Furthermore, Diana is reluctant to join her mother's business because this time she is in Spain with a business and family migratory project of her own: to regroup with her husband and, between them, to save up in order to bring over their children and set up their own business.

The relationship between Raquel and her seventeen- and eighteen-year-old children (the youngest is eleven and therefore still at school) is even more conflictive than Alejandra and Diana's. Raquel's entire life revolves around her bar. She has no particularly happy memories, especially ever since she was joined by her children. She claims that it would have been better if they had never come to Spain, due to the type of relationship this situation has generated.

Ricardo and Toni arrived in Madrid, aged twelve and thirteen. As in the case of Diana, they had difficulties integrating into school life.

The kids called us 'niggers', so we would hit them so they really would have something to call us, those fucking niggers [...]. So we started skiving off and getting kicked out. In the end we left school.

Today neither Ricardo nor Toni study or work, nor do they offer their mother the help she expects with the domestic chores.

I've done nothing for the last year, just hung around. Housework is for women, we're male chauvinists.

Contrary to their mother's wishes, our interviewees refuse to work in the bar.

My mother is really mean, she doesn't give us anything, buy us any clothes or anything; that's why we don't want to help out with the business. We used to work, when I was twelve, but not anymore.

Ricardo and Toni believe they have just three choices for their future. The first is to go back to the Dominican Republic.

If my mum sent me 300 or 400 euros a month, bought me a house and a car then I'd go back. I'd be able to live like a king, lend people money, buy a gun and make sure I got my money.

The second option is to migrate to the United States, where their father, who left them when the eldest was just a year old and the youngest hadn't even been born, now lives. The third option is for their mother to set them up in a clothing store.

My mother should set up a clothes store for me and then I'd do all right. The best thing is to have your own business, be your own boss. I don't want anyone fucking me about and telling me what to do. That way I could go to the States to buy clothes to sell here.<sup>12</sup>

We can observe that the experiences of Alejandra's and Raquel's children share certain similarities. Difficulties in integrating into school life on arrival in Spain at a critical age (between twelve and sixteen), plus a rebellious attitude towards their mothers – the heads of transnational households who have failed to maintain their authority and whose expectations for the social mobility of their children have been frustrated. Families are affected by the physical separation and the barriers that are built up as a result of separation over a period of time, due to the many hours their mothers, as heads of single-parent households, are forced to spend working outside the home. The result is that Raquel's and Alejandra's children feel no sense of obligation towards their parents and consequently fail to compensate their mothers' efforts by helping them out with the business.

The case of Beatriz, Elisa's daughter, differs considerably from that of Ricardo and Toni. She accompanied her mother when she migrated from Argentina, and at no time have they been separated. As discussed earlier, Beatriz feels indebted to her mother and obliged to help with the family business by working in domestic service as repayment for the latter's efforts to finance her studies in Spain. Their joint migration added to Beatriz's sense of commitment, who sees the business as part of a joint strategy for the family's upward social mobility.

This leads us to pose a series of hypotheses. Firstly, the possibility that transnational maternity and its related problems (loss of authority and control over children), heightened by the lack of time single mothers who are also entrepreneurs are able to devote to their children, leads to the loss of a sense of duty and obligation children feel towards their parents. Children therefore become less involved in the family business and their sense of obligation and duty towards their mothers is far less developed.

Secondly, and as Parreñas points out, in the case of lone female migrants, transnational motherhood requires children to assume non-traditional gender roles within their families. She argues that unlike the descendants of male migrants, the children of migrant women are 'caught within an "ideological stall" in the societal acceptance of female-headed transnational households', to the extent that the family 'does not fit the

traditional nuclear household model' (Parreñas 2004: 49-50). As various research projects have shown, a moralising discourse regarding female migration has appeared in countries, such as Ecuador and the Philippines, with a high percentage of lone female migrants, stigmatising long-distance motherhood and migrant children (Parreñas 2004; Pedone 2006). A second hypothesis is that some of the children of these lone female migrants could be influenced by this moralising discourse, thereby heightening their sense of abandonment and leading to a weaker sense of duty and obligation towards their parents.

Consequently, the children of single-mother entrepreneurs who have experienced transnational maternity would only agree to getting involved in the family businesses if they respond to an attractive business model (a coffee shop for Diana and a US clothing store for Raquel's children). Yet they are not prepared to sacrifice their status or their individual projects for the family business. Their emotional ties and the authority their mothers can exert over them have been affected by two issues: the first is the physical separation (transnational motherhood); and the second is the barriers built up as a result of the limited time single-mother entrepreneur heads of households are able to devote to their families.

We should nevertheless state that while parents may have experienced difficulties in exerting their authority over children and a gradual distancing in parent-child relations due to transnational parenthood (most of the time motherhood – where mothers have migrated and left their children behind in the care of domestic servants or female members of the family (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila 1997)), similar cases can also be found amongst parents running their own businesses who, due to a lack of time, transfer part of their reproductive work to an elder child. Similar cases of gradual distancing or absence of relations between parents and children can also be found amongst former Chinese split families and immigrant parents who, due to a lack of time, transferred part of the reproductive and care work to an elder child, albeit with varying consequences in terms of the children's sense of duty towards the family business. In France, Liu-Mei was raised by her elder sister, Hua, and hardly ever saw her parents – who, as already mentioned, were working hard to save up for their business. Liu-Mei, who is far more committed to the family business than her younger sister, and her brother, explained that through her involvement, she came to know, love and respect her parents whilst working in the takeaway food venue (i.e. the family binding aspect of family business), which is maybe less the case of the other younger siblings. Unlike the previous cases, despite the geographic separation and transnational childhood at early ages, the feeling of abandonment and the sense of loss of duty amongst children seems attenuated, as exemplified by Liu-Mei and Hua's case history. In this example we could also point to a number of explanatory hypotheses. For example, Liu-Mei stresses the sacrifice

made by her parents (who did not abide by the single-child policy), who were prepared to go into debt in order to regroup her, Hua and her younger sister, who arrived in France as a baby. Our informant also highlights the difficulties she experienced in communicating with her parents before the business opened: apart from Hua, parents and children do not speak the same language. These factors, which are absent in the case of Latin American immigrants, together with a clearly stronger sense of criticism directed against transnational Latin American mothers, could explain the lower degree of commitment their children feel. As we have seen, some children of immigrants do not feel obliged or committed to work in their parents' business and are only willing to do so if it fits in with their personal projects for social mobility. This indicates that the nature of the exchange is also affected by the type of social mobility project, in turn, influenced by the transnational dimension, which forms the context for these businesses.

## **7.6 The transnational dimension within the framework of family social mobility projects and the nature of exchanges**

Another factor to consider when analysing the nature of children's commitment to the family business is the transnational dimension of social mobility. Indeed, when compared with those of their non-migrant counterparts, one of the most striking characteristics of immigrant enterprises is that the family's social mobility must be understood within the framework of at least two social spaces (the country of origin and the host country). This aspect occasionally means that the dispersed family (transnational households) benefits from the business in a different manner. Cases may occur whereby some children in the host country are required to occupy a non-mercantile position in the family business, working free of charge or with modest earnings in order to keep the enterprise going and ensure the social mobility of a transnational family. This follows for the above-mentioned case of Afif, of Moroccan origin, who worked for many years in his father's business without receiving a real salary. His father's intention was for his son to inherit the store. On the one hand, Afif was proud that his father wanted him to take over his bakery; he felt his commitment was recognised as he is the only child working in his father's business. On the other hand, he would have rather received money to build his house in Morocco. Probably, Afif felt slightly pressured to make a sacrifice; several times throughout his interview he expressed bitterness at not being able to pursue his studies, unlike his siblings. Thanks to the profits generated by the business in France, his brothers were able to receive an education and their insertion into the education system allowed them to plan their social mobility in the country

of origin, outside the confines of the family business. Yet for Afif, creating a career for himself in France through education is more complex, due to his greater difficulties in integrating into the educational system in comparison with his brothers in Morocco (the French education system is much more demanding, according to him). It is quite possible that faced with his siblings' acquisition of cultural capital as well as social capital through their education in Morocco, Afif would have liked to be able to build financial capital and therefore show off his own achievements thanks to a regularly salary. Afif is therefore not satisfied with the gift-for-gift relation, as it fails to conform to his personal desire for social mobility. Consequently, he currently rejects the idea of inheriting the business.

### **7.7 The impact of children's labour and commitment on their sense of ethnic belonging**

One might ask whether helping out, or a greater commitment, may provide an ethnic community with a sense of belonging and cultural identity, as posited by Song (1999).

In the Zhou family in France, Hua explained that her youngest sister was reluctant to work in the family business. In her narrative, Hua made a distinction between Chinese children and Chinese-European children. Implicitly, she distinguishes between 'us' – the 'good' or 'real' Chinese – and 'them' or 'the others' who are not completely Chinese (such as her youngest sister). And she mentioned the importance of helping out in the family shop in order to establish a good reputation within the Chinese community, an outlook that Song (1999) has already pointed out. Hua's views are a reminder of Song's in terms of some young Chinese seeing their labour commitment as being part of their Chinese identity, while its absence is a sign of the westernisation of these young Chinese people. So through this example and others, it seems that Hua constructs her ethnicity in relation to her participation in the business (she is not 'Chinese-European'). Talking about her youngest sister, Hua claims that:

She did not want to work at the caterer's! Not at all! I told her: 'Had I said the same thing as you say now, had I not gone to work, would we have made it this far? Being well-off now, having a house, speaking correct French, being fed properly, having a good reputation within the Chinese community? Do you really think we would have made it? Without everyone working hard in the first place?' My sister told me: 'Yes, but we are in France and not in China, we do not act like the Chinese. Here, children do not work.' She is OK, my sister, she has a good attitude, but she often speaks like the... the European Chinese. [...]. Their mentality is very bad. They do not

understand the value of money, of work, of respect. [...]. Because they have been alienated by the European mentality.

The impact of children's labour and commitment on their sense of ethnic belonging is not limited to Chinese families. For instance, Gilda, the child of Portuguese immigrants who helped out in her mother's business, also explained that her feeling of obligation and commitment was part of her Portuguese culture, which implies the importance of honouring one's debts (just as it is important to keep religious promises). So someone who would not submit to the obligation is implicitly not considered a 'good Portuguese person'. It has already been suggested that among the transnational families interviewed, some of the Latin American children left behind, who were reunited after living for several years with their grandparents, were less committed to the family business and were eager to go back to the country of their birth. In this case, we could conclude that ethnicity is not built up through involvement in the family business and a sense of commitment to the family, as in Hua's case, but instead through the quest for greater contact with the country of origin.

Diana, as already mentioned, decided to return to the Dominican Republic when she turned eighteen, acting against the wishes of her mother. Although her discourse does not include an explicit rejection of Spain, it does explain the difficulties she experienced integrating into school life. When she arrived in Madrid, and as a result of the lesser presence of Latin American immigrants, it was hard to reproduce her ethnicity in Spain, due to a lack of ethnic community spaces (Dominican bars, discos, etc.). This, together with the problems she experienced in getting used to living with her mother, plus her teenaged rebelliousness, drove her to return to her country of origin.

I didn't fit in at school, the standard of English and maths was really high. I went from being a model pupil to bottom of the class [...] When I arrived here, in 1992, there weren't as many Latins as now. Now when you go out you'll meet five to ten Dominicans. Here, in this area, most of the residents are of Latin American origin. I was the only black girl at my school, it was really hard, and even though I spoke Spanish, I didn't talk like they did, which isolated me, making me feel really terrible [...]. The fact that I was seventeen also made it worse; ever since I was small, my mother has been the head of the household, but she was always out at work, so I spent all my time with my grandmother [in reference to the period before she came to Spain]. It wasn't so much a question of getting used to the country, but to my mother. She was like a stranger to me [...]. I was at a silly age and I didn't want to live with my mother, it was like an act of rebellion.



For Toni and Ricardo, Spain was a disappointment right from the start, as they had thought it would be like the US. As discussed earlier, they had always wanted to live there, where their father resided, considering it more attractive in terms of the fashions and its being a multicultural melting pot. In Spain, as stated above, they experienced educational failures and sometimes racial prejudice, such as being labelled 'niggers', and also got into trouble with the police. All these factors may have influenced their professional and migratory projects. As mentioned earlier, they would like their mother to set up a clothing shop for them, so they can travel to the US to buy merchandise and sell it in Spain. It would appear that the identity of these informants, who are attracted to rap culture, is more the result of their contact with American values than their Dominican ethnicity.

Guillermo, after remaining in the Dominican Republic with his grandmother for several years, failed to adapt to life in Spain and experienced problems at school. In order to overcome these migratory difficulties, he resorted to a 'transnational lifestyle', travelling at least once a year to his country of origin. However, his work as a paid employee in several Spanish companies prevented his spending more than one month a year in the Dominican Republic, which meant that he was continually changing jobs. He decided to get involved in the family businesses (a Dominican and an Ecuadorian restaurant), which provided him the flexibility he needed. Thanks to the family's workshift system, the various family members could spend longer periods in the Dominican Republic. However, Guillermo believes that the catering sector is 'really hard work', and he managed to convince his mother to finance a business in his country of origin (a cybercafé with video consoles), thereby enabling him to spend longer periods in the Dominican Republic. This is an alternative form of reproducing ethnicity different from those described above.<sup>13</sup>

It is clear that the relation between labour commitment to the family business and the reproduction of ethnicity is not lineal. Whilst certain children of immigrants (such as Gilda and Hua), see their involvement in the family business as a way of affirming their ethnicity, others (Diana, Toni and Ricardo), reject the idea of working in their parents' companies, opting instead to build up their identity through greater contact with the country of origin or other countries (e.g. US). A third group (as exemplified by Guillermo) set up businesses in their place of birth, thereby enabling them to spend longer time in contact with their 'roots'.

## 7.8 Conclusion

To conclude, we would like to recap several of the issues discussed in our chapter.

1. What is the nature of children's commitment to the family business and how do family members present their commitment? The interviews with the children of immigrant entrepreneurs and their parents have revealed the existence of a debt that must be repaid, as in the case of Gilda, Susana, Beatriz and her mother. Secondly, children may perceive a growing influence of money in the family business relations and understand it as a threat to the relationships. Commitment is therefore seen as a gift given freely, as a means of preventing social relations from degenerating into a mere business transaction, as shown by Hua's involvement in the family business. Thirdly, some children of immigrant entrepreneurs perceive their contribution to the ethnic business as work performed within the framework of a market relationship, and seek to establish a business relationship within the enterprise, with the assignment of a due and regular substantial salary or a sum of money, as in the case of Afif.

2. What lies behind the family members' commitment to the ethnic family business? It should be stressed that within the framework of the 'circulation of aid' (which we have opted to term 'commitment'), the giver is 'guided by the needs of the received' (Godbout 2000). In other words, and as discussed by Song (1999), children's commitment is based on their sense of being needed by their parents. Hua, Beatriz and Susana are examples of this: regardless of whether or not they feel obliged to give a gift,<sup>14</sup> they strongly feel that their commitment is – or has been – necessary, thereby strengthening their involvement in the family business.

According to Song (1999), 'integral children' (those who are more committed to the family business, acting as mediators for their parents and carrying out domestic chores) are more perceptive to the fact that their contribution is important for the survival of the family unit. Opinions regarding the usefulness of their contribution vary considerably amongst those we interviewed. Gilda, for instance, does not believe that her work is responsible for the success of her father's taxi and her mother's restaurant, nor does she consider her involvement in her mother's business absolutely essential. Instead, her commitment is the result of a sense of obligation to repay her parents with a counter-gift, within a context where she is seen to occupy a privileged position amongst several givers and receivers (her brother and sister).

The narratives also confirm that labour commitment is influenced by the family life cycle, gender, the siblings' position within the family and intra-family conflict. Indeed, education, insertion on the labour market in accordance with the qualifications obtained, as well as other situations the children encounter during their life cycle (personal relations, etc.), may impact their involvement in the business and lead to a lesser degree of participation. In addition, daughters and elder children seem to be more committed to the family business and domestic chores than the sons and

other brothers and sisters. The individual's position in terms of the life cycle articulated with the migratory and business cycles may provide an explanation for why some children of immigrant entrepreneurs tend to work harder and become more involved in the family business. The children's degree of participation is greater if they are of working age (life cycle) precisely at the time the decision is made to set up, convert or purchase a new business (migratory cycle), which, during its early days (business cycle), may incur debts and require family labour to face financial implications. On the other hand, a drop in commercial activity due to fiercer competition may reduce the need for children to become involved in the family business. In their narratives, the children clearly stated that these factors affect their perception of the degree of commitment to the family business required.

The intergenerational conflicts reflected in our informants' narratives and that impact on the degree of labour commitment generally arise as a result of differences in the reciprocal expectations of parents and children regarding the latter's commitment to the family business. The children consider, for instance, this commitment to come in the form of labour, though for the parents it is a gift (as in the case of the Touzani family). Other more general disappointments are also observed, such as those concerning family relations and associated with the business, if this fails to meet their expectations (i.e. the children of migrants fail to value the family business).

3. How do the concepts of justice and equality affect the gift? These concepts appear particularly in the event of inter and intra generational conflicts. As Godbout (2000) discussed, these concepts are most visible when there is one giver and various receivers, or vice versa, rather than just one giver and one receiver. Examples include conflicts associated with intergenerational gifts (in the cases of Gilda and Afif and their brothers and sisters), or varying degrees of commitment to the family business expressed by brothers and sisters.

4. How do transnational relations affect children's commitment to the family business? The extent and nature of commitment, together with the social construction of ethnicity through commitment, are affected by transnational relations. Within the migratory context, the type of family would explain, to a certain extent, the degree of the sense of commitment to entrepreneur parents and the business. Within Chinese families, regrouped children tend to consider working in the family business as a form of 'family bonding', whilst in Latin American families we have seen that parents' authority over their children is less in the case of those families separated by long distances (transnational female-headed households), as is their children's degree of involvement and commitment

towards the business. The issue of abandonment appears in the narratives, whereby children are separated from their mothers for several years. If, as Godbout and Caillé claim (1991), the gift serves to create, sustain or recreate social relations between people, we could then pose the question as to whether the refusal of some of these adult children to become involved in the family business is a deliberate means of not establishing or re-establishing this 'family bonding'. The lower degree of commitment shown by the children of transnational mothers may also be due to the moralising discourse that criticises migrant mothers who leave their children behind in the country of origin, in contrast to family migration, which can be more easily understood within the framework of family strategies for social mobility, such as the migration-business projects of certain Chinese families.

5. How does this sense of commitment fit in with family and/or individual social mobility projects, namely with the place the family business occupies in the career plans of the immigrants' children? Indeed, if the business forms part of their professional plans, the children will tend to accept non-mercantile relations, working without a salary on the understanding, if not expectation, that they will either inherit the business or develop their career in the business. However, if the children believe their future career lies outside the business, they will be less likely to help out. Their motivation to become involved in a non-mercantile relation will then only be motivated by accepting the idea that their labour is aimed at family mobility or by a sense of indebtedness towards their parents, and will essentially be based on the factors discussed above. If the business is not part of their professional plans, the commitment is indeed more positively experienced if their labour is aimed at repaying or inverting a debt and indirectly serves their own project (such as enabling them to study).

It must also be said that business-based family social mobility projects can lead to controversial situations. The transnational element (social mobility in the country of origin) is of vital importance here. When children see their unpaid or low-paid work in the business represents a tool for the social mobility of their siblings in the country of origin rather than for themselves, they may begin to question the gift-for-gift relation, and demand that their involvement in the enterprise be placed on a proper business footing. Children who experienced a transnational childhood are more likely to be committed when the business serves their transnational projects (shuttling between countries or setting up a business in the country of origin).

Finally, if, as literature has indicated, it is true that for some children of immigrant entrepreneurs involvement in the family business strengthens their ethnic identity, it's equally true that others refuse to work

in the business and reconstruct their identity by returning to their country of origin or seeking contact with third countries such as the US. Setting up a business in their place of birth is another means of strengthening ethnicity as well as transnational lifestyle. Thanks to these businesses, certain immigrant families set up a work rotation system that enables them to travel more often to their country of origin than salaried employees, thereby further consolidating transnational practices.

To conclude, in order to define the intergenerational arrangements taking place within ethnic family businesses, it seems relevant to consider the difference between parents' and children's accounts of help exchange and children's commitment as well as siblings' accounts of help exchange and their respective sense of commitment. Furthermore, notions of justice, equality and the marketisation of family relationships are, in addition to the notion of debt and gift, elements for consideration in determining the degree and type of commitment children feel towards migrant family businesses. Sibling and intergenerational relationships, the children's position in the family life cycle, as well as the situation in the migratory and business life cycles, type of migrant families (transnational or reunited), the child's career plans and, presumably, gender may all explain the nature of exchange within the family business (gift/counter-gift, market relations or even absence of commitment). Notably, transnational relations, as well as representations around lone female migrants and long-distance motherhood, together with the emotional proximity between family members, may influence children's sense of commitment to the family business.

## Notes

- 1 This chapter is based on the results of two field-work projects respectively carried out in France and Spain. One was part of a research project entitled *The Chances of the Second Generation in Families of Ethnic Entrepreneurs: Intergenerational and Gender Aspects of Quality of Life Processes* (known in short as *Ethnogenesis*), involving project partners in Germany, the UK, Denmark, Greece and France (as well as cooperating projects in Switzerland and Spain). *Ethnogenesis* research was funded by the Fifth Framework Programme of the European Commission. The international scientific coordinator was Ursula Apitzsch at Johann Wolfgang Goethe-University, Frankfurt am Main. Both based at Université de Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense, Mirjana Morokvasic coordinated the French component of this research and Christine Catarino conducted the interviews. The Spanish research consisted of two projects: the first was financed by the Ministry of Education and Research (SEJ2004-07750, Oso 2007) and was conducted in cooperation with the *Ethnogenesis* project; the second was financed by the Ministry of Science and Innovation (SEJ2007-63179, Oso 2009), with the financial help of the Consellería de Educación e Ordenación Universitaria, Xunta de Galicia (Axuda para a consolidación e a estruturación de unidades de

- investigación competitivas do Sistema Universitario de Galicia 2011-CN2011/030-ESOMI-Equipo de Investigación en Sociología de las Migraciones Internacionales). The French results are available in Morokvasic and Catarino (2005).
- 2 Whenever possible, biographical interviews were conducted with different members of the same families (parents and children but also siblings) and with both sexes from different generations (parents and their children).
  - 3 In France, we investigated 22 families of diverse national backgrounds – Chinese, Portuguese, Italian, Algerian and Moroccan – via 39 formal interviews and about ten informal discussions. In Spain, we investigated 36 families via 104 interviewed persons who were from several migrant groups: Chinese, Moroccans and people from Latin America (notably, Argentina and Venezuela) including return migrants (Spanish migrants, returnees and descendants of Spanish migrants from Latin America and Europe). Several researchers participated in this study, namely, Laura Oso, who directed the project, Natalia Ribas, Amelia Sáiz, Angeles Ramírez, Irene López, Marta Carballo, María Villares and Raquel Albela. In this chapter, we focus on a number of those cases, mainly concerning families from Latin America. The interviews with Latin American migrants and returnees whose cases are presented here were conducted by Raquel Albela, Marta Carballo, María Villares and Laura Oso.
  - 4 Note that authors, such as Testart (2007), propose distinguishing between ‘exchange’ and ‘gift’, assuming that a gift cannot become assimilated into an exchange, not even a non-economic one. The author criticises Mauss’ description of the triple obligation intrinsic in a gift: giving, receiving and returning. According to Testart, if reciprocity is the condition of any exchange, it can never be requested in the form of a gift (although reciprocity may be expected and even solicited). There is therefore no obligation to reciprocate a gift, which can never be equated with an exchange. Without ignoring these theoretical debates, for pragmatic reasons, we use the word ‘exchange’ throughout the chapter to refer inclusively to a gift instead of using a more neutral expression such as the ‘circulation of goods and services’.
  - 5 Authors’ translation.
  - 6 ‘Migrant returnees’ refers to Spaniards who emigrated to Europe or Latin America but have now returned to Spain.
  - 7 The interviews with Elisa and Beatriz were conducted by María Villares.
  - 8 Lobet is interested in the breakdown of such transfers.
  - 9 Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE), <http://www.ine.es>.
  - 10 The early years of the twenty-first century have seen the increasing masculinisation of Latin American immigration in Spain. By this, we refer to the fact that although there are still more women than men in this group, the gender gap has shrunk, thus reflecting how female pioneers have gradually regrouped males. The result is a shift from a clearly feminised migration to a more family-oriented one (Oso & Catarino forthcoming).
  - 11 Women migrating on their own would merely represent 18 per cent of the migrant women according to the DREES survey *Parcours et Profils des Migrants Récemment Arrivés ou Régularisés en France*, as presented in Algava and Bèque (2008).
  - 12 The interviews with Raquel, Toni and Ricardo were conducted by Marta Carballo.
  - 13 The interviews with Guillermo and his family were conducted by Raquel Albela.
  - 14 As already mentioned, Hua’s discourse reveals a sense of commitment that is removed from feelings of obligation.

## Annex

Table 7.1 *On children's commitment, life project and type of migration*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Commitment</i>	<i>Role of the business in the project</i>	<i>Type of migration</i>
Gilda	Committed, feeling of obligation (having to repay a debt) but positive experience	Business is not part of personal project; though resents working in the business, it enabled her to invert her debt and realise her project of studying	Family migration, not transnational
Susana	Committed, feeling of obligation (having to repay a debt), positive experience but less so than Gilda's. On the one hand, feels obliged to pay her parents back for all the sacrifices they made for the family and to provide her with an education. However, working in the business has limited her education options (choice of degree, completing her studies abroad, etc.)	Business is not part of personal project, which is to work in her profession, though it is considered a professional safety net at the least	Family migration, not transnational
Beatriz	Committed, performs waged domestic work to sustain her mother's business project and helps out in the business to repay a debt (her mother worked as a domestic worker so as to pay her education)	Epoused idea of being committed to realise her mother's personal project (to set up and maintain a business)	Family migration (composed of mother and daughter with a son abroad)
Hua	Committed, her commitment was perceived positively as a resistance to the marketisation of society and its threat to the family relationships; however, a change in her personal circumstances changed her family's perception of her for the worse	Wanted the business to be aimed at the family's well-being; personal project espoused what she perceived as that of the family's, though felt disappointed because her father did not transform the takeaway venue into a restaurant and expectations of her private life being respected went unfulfilled	Family migration, former transnational fragmented family and with an initial distance between children and parents due to parents' lack of time
Hua's sister Liu-Mei	Less committed than Hua, although felt an obligation to help out and initially saw her commitment as family bonding	Personal project is to study; there is no real connection between personal and family projects	Family migration, formerly transnational fragmented family and with an initial distance between children and parents due to parents' lack of time

Table 7.1 *continued*

Name	Commitment	Role of the business in the project	Type of migration
Alif	Committed, now perceives his commitment less positively	Business is aimed at the family's well-being abroad; feels frustrated and would like to impose an economic relationship with his father	Transnational
Diana	No commitment, no feeling of obligation	Aspires to work as a salaried employee so as to reunite her own family (like her mother, she became a transnational female-headed household)	Transnational motherhood, formerly fragmented family
Tony and Ricardo	No commitment, no feeling of obligation	Personal projects to set up their own business differ from their mother's project	Transnational motherhood, formerly fragmented family
Cuillermo	Committed	Business as a family project enabled travel to his country of origin (the family members run the business on a shift rotation basis) and allowed him to carry out personal project of setting up a business in the Dominican Republic	Transnational, formerly fragmented family

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## **8 Spousal reunification among recent immigrants in Spain: Links with undocumented migration and the labour market**

*Amparo González-Ferrer*

### **8.1 Introduction**

In 2007, one of the most widely read Spanish newspapers published the following headline: ‘Family reunification opens the door to 245,000 new immigrants in only three years. The government says a second stage in the migratory process is starting’ (Bárbulo 2007). Spain’s Secretary of State of Immigration stated that this increase in the number of foreigners who had been granted a residence permit on the basis of family reunification must be seen as a good sign because ‘[...] family reunification is a factor that promotes settlement’ and ‘[...] favours integration into the host society and reduces the immigrants’ risk of social isolation’. In the same vein, some immigration scholars said that this trend would continue in the near future since ‘family reunification is practiced by people who have consolidated their migration project after achieving economic stability and social integration’ (Bárbulo 2007).

These statements indirectly suggest that labour immigration to Spain is progressively declining as many migrants, who initially came as temporary workers, extend their stay and start to bring their families over for the purpose of settlement. Accordingly, family reunification is described as a secondary flow that is initiated once first-movers have lived in the immigration country long enough to make the necessary arrangements to send for their relatives. As a result of this view, family-linked immigration is often equated to legal family reunification and ‘de facto’ family reunification is completely neglected, which, in turn, reinforces the view of family-linked migration as a secondary flow. In countries where undocumented immigration has become a chronic and structural feature, as in the case of Spain, this view might be particularly misleading in describing and understanding the household dimension of international migration and integration. Moreover, as Creese et al. (this volume) also mention, such a view tends to obscure the flexibility of the immigrant household to adopt responsive strategies to changing circumstances, becoming a central lynchpin to successful integration.

To shed some light on these issues, I have used both official aggregate statistics and survey data to examine the size and pace of the family reunification process in Spain, as well as to analyse whether different family

migration patterns are associated with differences in the behaviour of foreign immigrants in the host labour market. The obtained results strongly challenge the image provided by the Spanish government with regard to family reunification. On the one hand, my analyses indicate that family reunification – at least, the reunification of spouses – has been substantial and quite rapid in recent years. Moreover, the data suggest that spousal reunification on the fringes of the law has actually been much more common in Spain than legal reunification, which could be related to the rigidity of the legal regime, the inefficiency of the immigration system and the soft enforcement of internal controls. In addition, variations in the manner in which family migration is organised appear to affect the performance of immigrants in the Spanish labour market, although such effects vary greatly by gender.

## **8.2 Previous research about family-linked migration and integration outcomes**

North American studies have systematically emphasised the centrality of family networks in migration decision-making and behaviour (Massey 1990; Boyd 1989; Grasmuck & Pessar 1991; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Palloni, Massey, Ceballos, Espinosa & Spittel 2001; Curran & Rivero 2003). Since the mid-1980s, some scholars have tried to quantify the multiplier effect derived from family-chain migration (Jasso & Rosenzweig 1986; Jasso & Rosenzweig 1989; Yu 2008) and the consequences that a growing number of admissions on the basis of family ties may have for the receiving labour market (Borjas & Bronars 1991). In contrast, European scholars have largely neglected family-linked migration, despite the fact that it has been the predominant mode of legal entry into most European receiving countries for the last 30 years (OECD 2003; Messina 2007). Family-linked migration has been mostly conceived as a secondary flow, which is unwanted but unavoidable, as temporary foreign workers recruited in the 1960s extended their stay in host countries and enhanced their legal status (Joppke 1998). Such a view helps explain why academic research has historically focused almost exclusively on legal family reunification and legal requirements, rather than on the more comprehensive category of family-linked migration, its determinants and consequences (Kofman 1999).

The term ‘family reunification’ is commonly used to refer to the process by which the primary migrant or first-mover brings in immediate relatives, following the legal procedure established to this end by the receiving state (generally spouses and children, although the reunification of parents is sometimes accepted under more restrictive conditions). In contrast, ‘family-linked migration’ includes not only legal family reunification but also migration for the purpose of marriage (also called family-forming

migration), the simultaneous migration of the entire family unit (or part of it), the migration of cohabitating partners and same-sex couples, etc. (see Kofman 2004 for a comprehensive typology). Moreover, family-linked migration is not only migration classified as such by the immigration authorities of the receiving country; many migrants who were admitted as refugees already had close relatives living in the country when their applications were accepted and therefore participated in some sort of family-linked migration. This scenario also applies to migrants admitted as workers and especially to undocumented migrants, who are particularly likely to rely on family networks in order to make their way to the destination country. In other words, the term 'family-linked migration' refers to the actual family ties of the migrants and how these ties influence their reasons for migration and their migration strategy, regardless of how they fit into the admission categories established by the immigration law of the receiving states.

This distinction between category of admission and actual family links of the newcomers is crucial for evaluating whether the legal avenues available for the admission of migrants' relatives reduce the incentives for illegal migration. In the US, for instance, Massey, Duran and Malone (2003) demonstrated that the tightening of border control goes together with increasing undocumented migration, a stronger role of networks in facilitating entrance into the country and longer stays of the undocumented in the US. More recently, Cornelius, Borger and Sawyer (2008) have shown that, as a result of these longer stays and their associated longer family separations, the profile of undocumented Mexican migration has diversified to include fewer solo men and many more whole families, women and children who try to join their relatives on the other side of the border. Thus, it can be said that in the Mexican-US migration experience a clear link has been empirically established between immigration restrictions, undocumented migration and family-linked entries.

In the European context, empirically grounded research on these issues is still virtually lacking. As has been stated by different authors, the immigration literature in Europe, in contrast to North America, yields little in the way of quantitative analysis that documents the effect of network ties in promoting and sustaining international movements (Blotevogel, Muller-ter, Jung & Wood 1993; Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Massey, Pellegrino & Taylor 1998). In spite of this fact, family-linked migration is commonly viewed with distrust, and the idea that foreigners often make their family decisions in a strategic way to circumvent the restrictions on economic migration is widely extended. Actually, one of the main underlying reasons for such a negative view of family-linked migration has to do with the longstanding assumption in the literature that family migration mostly consists of women and children who would not work in the destination country. In other words, family and economic motivations

were conceived as mutually exclusive in shaping the migration decision and post-migration behaviour; family-linked migration was therefore expected to have a negative impact on the labour market and the welfare state of the receiving countries.

Following this rationale, some studies have compared the labour performance of immigrants admitted on the basis of their family ties and that of immigrants admitted as workers or refugees. In the US, the results for immigrants who arrived in the late 1970s and 1980s indicated that initial lower earnings and occupational status of kinship-based immigrants disappeared over time, after twelve to eighteen years in the country (Jasso & Rosenzweig 1995; Duleep & Regets 1996). Surveying Europe, Constant and Zimmermann (2005) have concluded that there are long-lasting effects of the legal status at entry on the earnings potential of immigrants in Germany, especially for immigrants admitted on the basis of asylum but also for those entering for a family reunion. In Denmark, refugees also experienced an employment penalty compared to non-refugees, although it seemed to be a temporary effect that disappeared after five to ten years in the country (Husted, Skyt Nielsen, Rosholm & Smith 2000). However, the negative effect on earnings of both asylum and family-related entry remained (Constant & Zimmermann 2005).

This evidence has reinforced the image of family migration as a type of migration contrary to economic migration and a type that is potentially harmful for the host economy. However, all these studies measured the impact of the admission category on the labour market performance of immigrants. Thus, their results are hardly surprising since receiving states commonly impose many more barriers to the economic activity of immigrants admitted on non-employment grounds. Bearing in mind the aforementioned difference between admission categories, the actual family ties of migrants and their role in the migration strategy, a totally different method would be to analyse whether migration motivated by family reasons – or at least partially by – has any impact on the labour market integration of immigrants (for an empirical example of the implications of this distinction in the case of Germany, see González-Ferrer 2006). In addition, most of the studies cited above focused on men's experiences, while it is well known that women largely outnumber men in family-related migration categories and that the factors influencing women's migration strategies and outcomes commonly differ from those affecting their male counterparts (Zlotnik 1995a, 1995b).

The transformation of women's role in society, along with the increasing feminisation of immigration flows, have favoured a more nuanced view of the relation between gender, family and work in migration contexts. Scholars have moved from the 'immigrant women-only' approach, which emphasises sex differences in migration systems to one that examines how gender as a social system contextualises migration processes for

both women and men (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1999). A growing number of studies have demonstrated that variations in the process of family formation and reunification of migrants, independently of their mode of entry, affect their ulterior settlement strategies and integration outcomes, in both the US and Europe (for undocumented Mexicans in the US, see Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; for migrants from the recruitment countries in Germany see González-Ferrer 2006). Although most Mexican wives who followed their husbands northward do not participate in the US labour market, the labour behaviour of daughters and of wives who migrated jointly with their husbands resembles the men's behaviour much more (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Cerruti & Massey 2001). In addition, the role of family networks has been shown to be distinct and, to some extent, more important for women than for men in both shaping their migration decision and their post-migration behaviour (Curran & Rivero 2003). However, immigration regulation and labour market policies, as a joint influence, can alter the functioning of networks and the way migrant families adjust to the resulting set of incentives (Raghuram 2004; Kogan 2008; Creese, Dyck & McLaren this volume).

All these issues are crucial for an accurate understanding of current immigration dynamics in countries like Spain; where flows are highly feminised, a strong demand for cheap labour in women's occupations exists and immigration policies have not effectively discouraged undocumented residence and activity in the black economy.

### **8.3 Immigration admitted to Spain on the basis of family reunification provisions**

In Spain, the Foreigners Law did not include a reference to the right of family reunification until its first overall reform in 2000. Since then, foreigners who intend to bring their spouse, their minor children (under eighteen) or their dependent parents to live with them in Spain must prove that: 1) they have legally resided in Spain for one year and are allowed to stay at least one year more and 2) that they have adequate housing and sufficient income to sustain the family. The income requirement is generally met if the applicant can demonstrate continuous wage employment during the last three to six months, depending on the province, and about €300 a month per relative. These conditions appear relatively easy to meet, especially in comparison to the requirements imposed by other EU countries like Denmark, where the applicant needs to have held a permanent Danish residence permit for the past three years or more, or the Netherlands, where the income requirement for the reunification of the spouse was €1,260.28 per month in January 2008 – the highest in the European Union.<sup>1</sup>

However, despite relatively soft legal requirements for family reunification, the administrative procedure to sponsor the legal immigration of immediate family members to Spain has been messy and extremely time-consuming until very recently; decisions generally took more than two or three years to be made due to the enormous backlog in immigration offices. Figures in Table 8.1 clearly illustrate this point. As can be observed, from 2000 to 2001, there were more than 17,000 applications for residence permits on the grounds of family reunification, but only 59 were granted. This caused cumulative delays in the years after and explains why the number of permits granted was sometimes larger than the number of applications presented that same year.

**Table 8.1** *Residence permits for the purpose of family reunification, 2000-2007*<sup>2</sup>

	<i>Applications of residence permits on the grounds of family reunification</i>	<i>Applications granted</i>	<i>% family reunification permits over total initial residence permits</i>	<i>% yearly growth of total initial residence permits</i>	<i>% yearly growth of family reunification permits</i>
2000	7,197	7	NA	NA	NA
2001	10,028	52	NA	NA	NA
2002	18,541	14,063	5.1	NA	NA
2003	32,561	33,814	16.7	-33.48	140.2
2004	NA	71,532	27.7	6.47	111.6
2005	74,852	74,919	9.7	271.46	4.7
2006	113,146	97,759	38.0	-76.97	30.5
2007	144,584	128,161	39.4	23.14	31.1
<b>Total</b>		<b>420,307</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>38.12</b>	<b>63.7</b>

Sources: Bárbulo (2005, 2007); CES (2007); Europa Press (2006); MTIN (2000-2008)

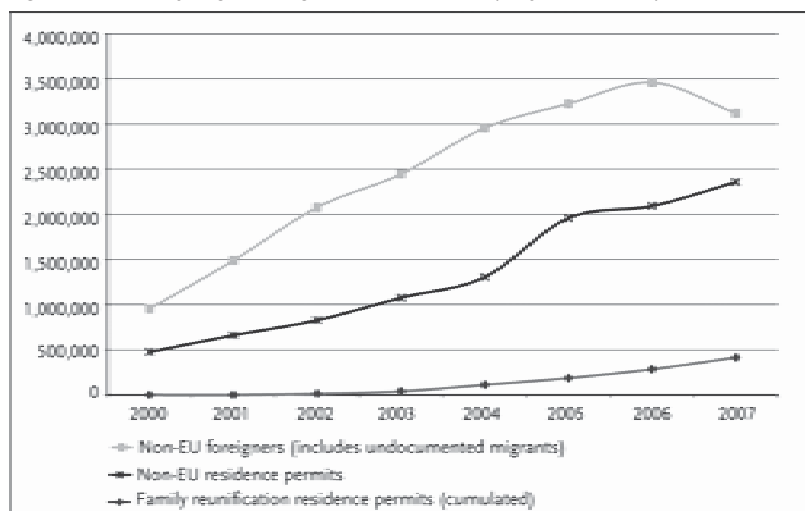
This situation improved after the reform of the Immigration Regulations in 2004, which shortened the time the Spanish administration could take to make a decision and allowed foreigners to submit an application for family reunification immediately after applying for the renewal of their first-year residence permit (even if they have not yet been granted the renewed one). However, even if an application for family reunification is accepted in Spain, it will still take a long time until reunification effectively takes place because the sponsored relatives need to obtain a visa in their country of origin, which is the most uncertain and complicated step of the entire process.<sup>3</sup> Taking into account the aforementioned difficulties, it is not surprising that legal entries on the grounds of family reunification to Spain did not represent, on average, more than 20 per cent of total annual legal entries since 2002 (see Table 8.1). In contrast, this percentage is substantially higher in other EU countries (see Kofman, Kraler, Kohli & Schmoll this volume).

The lack of a reasonable timely family reunification option within the



legal system has probably contributed to the breakdown of the integrity of the Spanish immigration system, which was fragile to begin with (see Hatch 2006 for a similar argument in the US). As can be seen in Figure 8.1, the number of non-EU foreigners living in Spain increased from about 1 million in 2000 to 3.5 million in 2006, while the number of initial residence permits granted for the purpose of family reunification over the entire period amounted only to 420,000. Many newcomers entered the country legally as tourists but became undocumented immigrants when their visas expired and they overstayed (see the difference between the number of non-EU residents and the number of valid residence permits in Figure 8.1). In 2002, for instance, the proportion of undocumented foreigners living in Spain was estimated to be approximately 70 per cent of the total foreign population; this percentage decreased to 40 per cent in 2005 and 24 per cent in 2007 (see Cebolla-Boado & González-Ferrer 2008). Bearing these figures in mind, it can be easily argued that statistics of permits granted for the purpose of family reunification clearly underestimate the actual size of family-linked migration to Spain, since a large proportion of the hundreds of thousands of 'bogus tourists' that entered the country over the last decade were likely practicing *de facto* family reunification.

**Figure 8.1** *Non-EU foreigners living in Spain, 2000-2007 (as of 31 December)*



Sources: Municipal Population Register (2000-2007); Residence Permit Statistics (2000-2007); see Table 8.1

Actually, foreign spouses who are willing to come to Spain have strong incentives to enter the country on tourist visas and overstay illegally. First

of all, this route into Spain would allow them to join their spouses much sooner than the legal procedure of family reunification. Secondly, until 2008, the labour status of spouses who overstayed their tourist visa and that of legally sponsored spouses did not differ much since the latter could only apply for a work permit after a year of legal residence in Spain.<sup>4</sup> Thirdly, and maybe most importantly, the risks associated with an undocumented status in Spain have been substantially lower than those of other receiving countries in the EU. On the one hand, the enforcement of internal immigration controls – following Brochmann's (1999) definition – has been traditionally soft in Spain. The number of expulsions due to undocumented residence amounted to 9,467 in 2007 (Ministry of Interior 2008), which barely represents 1.5 per cent of the estimated number of undocumented foreigners residing in the country that year (around 700,000). In addition, the implementation of regularisation programmes has been a common policy instrument during the last decade – since 2000 more than 1,300,000 foreigners have obtained residence permits through this type of process – which have definitely enhanced the incentives to overstay (De Bruycker 2000; Cebolla-Boado & González-Ferrer 2008). On the other hand, undocumented migrants in Spain are entitled to public health care and some other social services that may help mitigate their certainly disadvantaged situation.

For all these reasons, it is very likely that a substantial proportion of this tremendous growth in the non-EU foreign population recently taking place in Spain has been related to family reunification processes that occurred at the fringes of the legal reunification procedure. This prediction is the focus of the next empirical analyses.

## 8.4 Data

Surveys that include samples of immigrant origin people with information not only about the individual migrant, but also about the family are uncommon. The Spanish Labour Force Survey (LFS) constitutes a fortunate exception in this regard since it contains information on the composition and characteristics of both migrant and non-migrant households, and since the sample's size is large enough to allow separate statistical analyses of immigrants. However, some drawbacks remain. First of all, naturalised immigrants are not asked about their date of arrival to Spain in the LFS, which often forces researchers studying immigration issues with the LFS data to exclude them from their analyses. Secondly, and most important for this study, it does not collect information on the individual's date of marriage. This means it is impossible to distinguish between couples who married before (at least) one of the spouses migrated to Spain, and couples consisting of two foreigners who met and married after their ar-

rival in Spain. As such, using the LFS data might lead to misleading conclusions about the size and pace of the family reunification process in Spain if the proportion of foreign couples who met and married in Spain was large and if, because of the lack of information on the date of marriage, they were incorrectly classified as reunified couples. However, this is not likely to be the case. According to the recently released National Survey of Immigrants (2007),<sup>5</sup> out of the total number of foreigners living in Spain, who were older than fifteen on arrival and were married to another foreigner – i.e. my target population for this study – only 11 per cent were in couples whose marriage took place after their arrival in Spain. Thus, we can be reasonably confident about the reliability of the obtained results using the LFS data, despite its aforementioned limitation.

**Table 8.2.** *Characteristics of the immigrant population aged 16 and up, upon arrival to Spain*

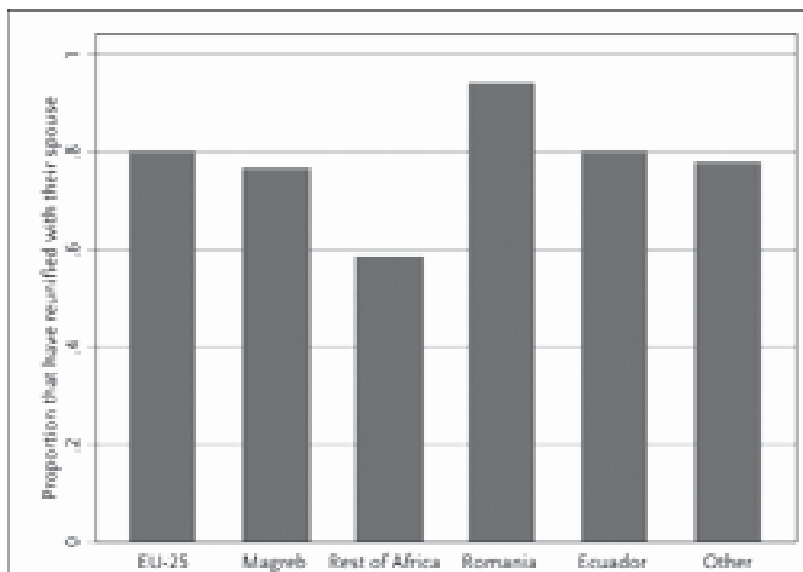
	<i>Married foreigners who arrived at age <math>\geq 16</math></i>	<i>Foreigners who arrived at age <math>\geq 16</math> and married a foreign spouse who had preceded their arrival</i>
Men	49%	66%
Mean age (standard deviation)	39 (11)	40 (11)
Years since migration (standard deviation)	7 (6)	7 (5)
Education		
Less than primary	10	11
Primary	17	19
Lower secondary	17	17
Upper secondary	34	36
Other secondary (vocational)	5	5
Tertiary	17	13
Origin		
EU-25 and other developed countries	19%	16%
Maghreb	18%	20%
Non-Maghreb Africa	5%	6%
Romania	14%	16%
Ecuador	11%	13%
Other countries	33%	29%
In mixed marriage	20%	100%
N	2,666	1,188

Source: LFS (2006, second quarter; author's own elaboration)

In 2006, the LFS (second quarter) included 2,666 married foreigners who had arrived in Spain at age sixteen and up and were classified as a 'person of reference' or 'spouse of the person of reference' in the survey. Approximately 20 per cent were married to a Spanish citizen and therefore were eliminated from my working sample. Of the 2,133 individuals remaining, 1,188 are first-movers and 945 are their spouses who lived in the same household.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the final sample used for analysing the process of spousal reunification consists of 1,188 foreigners married to non-Spanish spouses. Their main socio-economic characteristics are summarised in Table 8.2.

By the time of the survey, approximately 80 per cent of foreigners who migrated after having married someone in their homeland had already reunified with their spouses in Spain. According to this percentage – and bearing in mind that only 11 per cent of them are expected to be migrants who were single at migration and met and married their spouse in Spain – it seems justified to affirm that the foreign population currently living in Spain has largely completed the process of couple reunification, despite the fact that their immigration is quite recent.

**Figure 8.2** *Proportion of foreign married couples living together in Spain, by origin*



Source: LFS (2006, second quarter)

To get a better understanding of this phenomenon, I will examine in more detail some of the factors explaining why some foreigners bring their spouses sooner than others, by means of multivariate regression analyses.

Table 8.3 summarises the results of a logistic regression in which the dependent variable is having one's spouse living in the household (versus not). As can be seen, neither gender nor age at migration of the pioneer spouse (i.e. the spouse who migrated first) makes a significant difference in the probability of the spouses' reunification. In contrast, both education and time that has elapsed since migration appear as relevant factors in explaining the probability of having reunified with one's spouse in Spain. The least educated foreigners (those who have not completed primary school) are also the least likely to have their spouses living with them in Spain, compared to those with tertiary education (reference category). However, the differences between foreigners with tertiary education and with more than primary education are not significant (see education coefficients in Models 2 through 5 in Table 8.3).

The probability of having reunified with one's spouse increases with the length of residence in Spain, although the effect is not completely linear. Foreigners who had been in Spain only one or two years appear as likely to live with their spouse as those who had spent ten or more years in the country (reference category). In other words, for some reason, foreigners who arrived in Spain between March 2004 and March 2005 have been particularly successful in reunifying with their partners almost immediately after entering the country (see the coefficient for 1 or 2 years in Model 3, which is not statistically significant). What changed for immigrants who arrived in those years that made reunification with their spouses much easier than that of their predecessors? One possibility is that most immigrants arriving in that period had come from countries for which family reunification or, in general, immigration to Spain was easier than those from other countries. As mentioned, EU citizens enjoy a privileged legal regime with regard to family reunification that allows them to bring over their spouses and minor children at any moment. In fact, as seen in Figure 8.2, married immigrants from other EU countries, along with Romanians, live with their spouses in the highest proportion, whereas immigrants from African countries live separate from their spouses most frequently.

To check whether recent changes in the national origin mix of immigration flows to Spain might have been responsible for the unexpectedly high probability of having reunified with one's partner (among immigrants who arrived between 2004 and 2005), I added a set of dummy variables that control for place of origin in Model 4. Results confirm that couples from Romania are the most likely to have been reunified in Spain, even more so than EU citizens (reference category), despite the fact that the privileged legal regime for EU citizens was not applicable to Romanians at the time of the survey.<sup>7</sup> It therefore seems that the perspective of becoming EU citizens favoured *de facto* reunification among Romanian nationals living in Spain. In contrast, no significant differences in the

probability of spouses' reunification emerge between immigrants from the Maghreb and from Ecuador as compared to the EU-25 (reference category), which is unexpected.

**Table 8.3** *Logit model predicting the probability of having one's spouse living in Spain at the time of the survey, versus not (coefficients and standard error)*

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
<b>Gender (reference man)</b>					
Woman	-0.13 0.15	-0.22 0.16	-0.18 0.16	-0.25 0.16	-0.34 0.18
<b>Age (reference aged 17-25)</b>					
Aged 26-35	0.24 0.24	0.20 0.25	0.30 0.25	0.32 0.27	0.05 0.29
Aged 36-45	0.25 0.25	0.25 0.25	0.27 0.25	0.35 0.27	-0.26 0.29
Aged 46-60	-0.12 0.26	-0.05 0.27	-0.06 0.27	-0.04 0.28	-0.73* 0.30
<b>Education (reference tertiary)</b>					
Less than primary school		-0.99* 0.28	-1.11* 0.29	-0.85* 0.31	-0.92* 0.33
Less than lower secondary		-0.47† 0.27	-0.51† 0.27	-0.51† 0.28	-0.66* 0.30
Less than upper secondary		-0.12 0.28	-0.17 0.28	-0.24 0.29	-0.26 0.31
Less than tertiary		0.04 0.25	0.07 0.25	-0.09 0.26	-0.17 0.28
Other secondary		-0.14 0.41	-0.08 0.42	-0.28 0.43	-0.52 0.46
<b>Length of residence (reference no years or more)</b>					
Less than 1 year			-1.32* 0.43	-1.33* 0.45	-2.03* 0.49
1-2 years			-0.40 0.30	-0.62† 0.32	-0.68* 0.34
3-5 years			-0.52* 0.23	-0.75* 0.24	-0.83* 0.26
6-9 years			-0.27 0.23	-0.34 0.24	-0.50* 0.25
<b>Citizenship category (reference EU-25)</b>					
Maghreb				-0.27 0.28	-0.54 0.30
Non-Maghreb Africa				-1.15* 0.34	-1.16* 0.37
Romania				1.44* 0.38	1.27* 0.40
Ecuador				-0.10 0.30	-0.36 0.32
Other origin				-0.14 0.25	-0.45† 0.27
<b>Existence of children before migration (reference no pre-migration children)</b>					
Pre-migration children					1.88* 0.18
Constant	1.26* 0.22	1.53* 0.30	1.87* 0.35	2.10* 0.37	2.03* 0.39
N	1188	1188	1188	1188	1188
Log-likelihood	-599	-587	-580	-557	-493

Source: LFS (2006, second quarter)

\* Significant at 95%

† Significant at 90%

On the other hand, as expected, after controlling for origin, immigrants who had lived for only one or two years in Spain appear to be slightly less likely to have reunified with their spouses in Spain than those who resided in Spain for ten or more years (the coefficient for the 1 or 2 years variable becomes significant at 90 per cent). Other factors that may help explain these results are related to the change in the immigration administration after the Socialist Party came to power in 2004, along with the increasing expectations that a regularisation programme will take place soon. These two facts are likely to have created additional incentives for immigrants to bring their spouses more quickly than they had before. Unfortunately, longitudinal data or, at least, pooled cross-sections would be necessary to disentangle the ultimate cause of these results.

Finally, in Model 5, I added a variable that distinguishes between first-movers who already had children before migrating to Spain and immigrants who had not. The intention here was to explore whether migrants with a heavier economic burden because of family size are more or less likely to bring their spouses. However, the LFS only collects information about the people who usually live in the dwelling where the individual is being interviewed and does not collect information either on the household composition at the time of migration or about members of the household who have never lived in Spain. As a result, we only know if an individual has had children before migrating if the child has already been brought to Spain (in other words, there are migrants in the sample who have also had children before migrating, but we cannot know this if the children have never lived in Spain). This implies that the large, positive and significant coefficient for 'pre-migration children' in Model 5 (see  $B = 1.88$ ) may just be indicating that migrants who have brought at least one of their children to live with them in Spain are also more likely to bring their spouses, compared to those who have not brought any children yet.

#### 8.4.1 *How long did their spouses take to join them in Spain?*

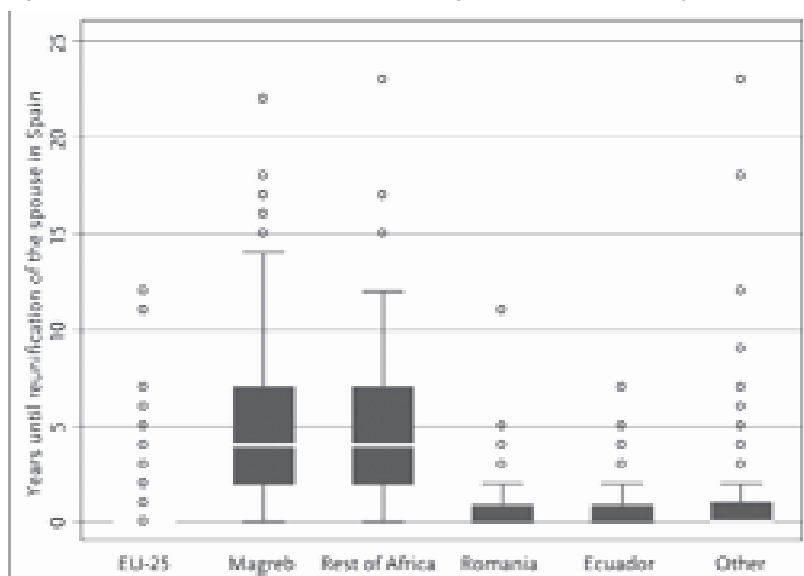
The conventional assumption is that immigrants do not bring their family over until they have integrated into the host society or at least stabilised their situation by obtaining a good and safe job. However, this hypothesis has rarely been empirically tested. Bearing in mind the high percentage of foreign married couples who have already reunified in Spain (approximately 80 per cent), I decided to complete the analysis by examining how long it took married first-movers to bring their spouses to the host country.

According to the data, foreign couples in the sample took on average only two years to reunify in Spain. Moreover, only 10 per cent of the couples in our sample have taken more than five years to reunify in Spain. It seems important to highlight that these results are not biased by the

inclusion of EU citizens, who enjoy a privileged legal regime with regard to family reunification as mentioned before. In fact, after restricting the sample to couples consisting of two non-EU citizens, the separation period before the spouses lived together in Spain is only 2.3 years.

These figures clearly support my expectation that a large proportion of married foreigners currently living in Spain have managed to reunify with their spouses on the fringes of the legal system. The Spanish Immigration Law requires one year of legal residence (plus having a renewed residence permit that allows stay for at least one more year) to qualify for legal family reunification. However, the amount of time required to complete all the steps in the procedure until the relative is legally admitted to Spain hardly ever lasts less than another year. If one also takes into account how few recent immigrants entered the country with a document that allowed them to legally stay for one year right away (since many of them entered on tourist visas), it seems virtually impossible that the 62 per cent of couples who took less than two years to reunify with their spouses in Spain managed to comply with the legal rules on family reunification.

**Figure 8.3** *Years that elapsed between spouses' immigration to Spain, by place of birth*



Source: LFS (2006, second quarter; author's own elaboration – see explanation in section 8.4 above)

On the other hand, these numbers strongly challenge the idea that immigrants who bring their relatives – in this case, their spouses – to Spain are people who have already achieved some sort of economic stability and



social integration and, consequently, decided to settle permanently. Rather, it seems that spousal reunification in Spain was largely planned as part of the family migration strategy from its very onset, probably because the couple's reunification might increase the migrants' saving capacity if both spouses work in the destination country.

Figure 8.3 summarised the distribution of the variable of interest – difference between both spouses' date of arrival in Spain – by place of birth. The line inside the box corresponds to the median time that elapsed until the arrival of the spouse for each origin group. In the case of couples from the Maghreb, for instance, 50 per cent took four years or less to be reunified with spouses in Spain, whereas the remaining 50 per cent took more than four years. The upper and lower limits of the box correspond to the first and the third quartiles of the whole distribution, which implies that in the case of married couples from the Maghreb, for instance, the group's central 50 per cent took between two and seven years to reunify in Spain. Finally, dots correspond to the outlier values within each origin group.<sup>8</sup> The main objective of this graph is to show, firstly, the observed variation in the pace of spousal reunification across the origin regions and, secondly, the dispersion around the median for each origin group.

As can be seen, foreigners from the Maghreb and the rest of Africa are the ones to take the longest time to reunify with their spouses in Spain, whereas couples consisting of EU citizens took the shortest (75 per cent took less than a year). Thus, contrary to my expectations, the older immigrant groups in Spain, such as the Moroccans, are not the ones reunifying quicker, but rather the opposite. This fact may relate to the different legal regimes applicable to immigrants from different national origins, differences in their family structure and gender roles, differences in their migration project and differences in their labour performance in Spain. To know more about the factors underlying differences in the pace of spousal reunification in Spain, I estimated a set of linear regression models in which the dependent variable is the number of years elapsed until the foreign couple reunified in Spain. Results from these estimations are summarised in Table 8.4. Results obtained in the specifications that do not take into account the length of time that the first-mover has lived in Spain (see Models 1 through 4) indicate that women tend to bring their spouses over sooner than men, and that first-movers with less than lower secondary education have taken longer in bringing their spouses to Spain than those with tertiary education (reference category). However, after controlling for place of birth in Model 3, the only group in which education makes a significant difference with regard to time that elapsed until spousal reunification in Spain, is among immigrants with less than primary school education.

**Table 8.4** *Linear regression models predicting number of years elapsed until the immigrant couple reunifies in Spain (coefficients and standard errors)*

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6 <6 years of stay	M7 > 6 years of stay
<b>Gender (reference man)</b>							
Woman	-1.80* 0.22	1.63* 0.21	-1.19* 0.20	-1.17* 0.20	-0.94* 0.18	-0.53* 0.11	-1.14* 0.33
<b>Age at migration (reference age at migration &lt; 25)</b>							
21-25	-0.83† 0.49	-0.67 0.47	-0.45 0.44	-0.47 0.44	-0.22 0.40	0.01 0.29	-0.11 0.64
26-30	-1.54* 0.48	-1.30* 0.46	-0.88* 0.43	-0.92* 0.43	-0.44 0.39	0.20 0.28	-0.66 0.63
31-35	-1.98* 0.49	-1.78* 0.47	-1.26* 0.44	-1.34* 0.44	-0.77† 0.40	0.24 0.28	-1.11† 0.67
≥ 35	-2.67* 0.47	-2.44* 0.45	-1.61* 0.42	-1.66* 0.43	-1.02* 0.39	0.14 0.28	-1.50* 0.64
<b>Education (reference tertiary)</b>							
Less than primary school		3.35* 0.42	1.03* 0.42	0.97* 0.43	0.42 0.39	-0.09 0.33	0.45 0.62
Less than lower secondary		0.87* 0.35	0.10 0.33	0.06 0.34	0.01 0.31	0.13 0.20	-0.07 0.54
Less than upper secondary		0.04 0.35	-0.15 0.33	-0.18 0.33	-0.23 0.30	-0.04 0.18	-0.19 0.54
Less than tertiary		0.06 0.31	0.11 0.29	0.10 0.29	0.06 0.26	0.05 0.16	-0.03 0.49
Other secondary		-0.67 0.51	-0.71 0.47	-0.74 0.47	-0.76† 0.43	-0.08 0.24	-1.40 0.88
<b>Citizenship category (reference EU-25)</b>							
Maghreb			3.53* 0.35	3.45* 0.35	3.54* 0.32	1.53* 0.25	4.53* 0.52
Non-Maghreb Africa			3.54* 0.50	3.45* 0.51	3.57* 0.47	1.32* 0.52	4.42* 0.69
Romania			0.10 0.32	0.05 0.32	1.24* 0.31	0.45* 0.18	1.87* 0.62
Ecuador			0.07 0.35	-0.03 0.36	1.05* 0.34	0.19 0.23	1.84* 0.58
Other origin			0.52 0.28	0.44 0.29	1.39* 0.27	0.24 0.16	2.43* 0.51
<b>Existence of children prior to migration (reference no premigration children)</b>							
Premigration children				0.15 0.23	0.00 0.00	0.00 0.00	0.00 0.00
<b>Number of persons in dwelling</b>							
				0.06 0.07	0.00 0.00	0.00 0.00	0.00 0.00

Table 8.4 continued

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6 ≤ 6 years of stay	M7 ≥ 5 years of stay
Duration of residence							
Reference					≥ 10 years	1 or 2 years	≥ 10 years
Less than 1 year					-3.40* 0.64	-0.09* 0.29	
1-2 years					-3.84* 0.35		
3-5 years					-3.43* 0.27	0.48* 0.13	
6-9 years					-3.08* 0.26		-3.18* 0.35
Constant	4.39* 0.45	3.68* 0.50	3.36* 0.51	3.15* 0.54	3.93* 0.51	0.34 0.34	3.54* 0.83
N	945	945	945	945	945	437	308
Log-likelihood	-2422	-2373	-2291	-2290	-2200	-645	-1300
Source: LFS 2006, second quarter							
* Significant at 95%							
† Significant at 90%							

Source: LFS (2006, second quarter)

\* Significant at 95%

† Significant at 90%

By region of origin, first-mover immigrants coming from Africa – from the Maghreb area and the rest of Africa – have taken significantly longer than EU citizens to reunify with their spouses in Spain. On the contrary, no significant differences emerge between Romanians and Ecuadorians as compared to EU citizens (see Model 4). Two main explanations may account for such a difference in the speed of couples’ reunification across different regions of origin: first, the greater difficulties that African migrants find in circumventing the obligation to obtain a visa compared to Latin Americans and Romanians;<sup>9</sup> second, there is a lower propensity of most African women to work in destination countries compared to Eastern Europeans and Latin Americans, which makes the strategy of couple’s reunification less profitable.

However, estimations in Models 1 through 4 in Table 8.4 did not include an important control variable: length of time in destination country by the first-mover. We are interested in analysing how the varying conditions in the reception context (including issues such as legislation regulating legal family reunification or legal immigration in general) influence the pace of spousal reunification among the immigrant population. As such, a key

issue is whether immigrants who arrived a long time ago – when the right to family reunification was not even recognised by Spanish immigration law – brought their spouses earlier or later than more recent cohorts. The main problem in trying to investigate this inter-temporal aspect of the family reunification process is the cross-sectional structure of our data, which might result in serious bias due to right censoring; since the analysis is done only for couples who have reunified already, the group of immigrants who have lived in Spain only for one or two years is expected to be much less representative of the whole immigrant population that arrived in Spain in the last two years, than the group of immigrants who lived in Spain for ten or more years. In fact, the importance of this potential bias can be fully appreciated by comparing the results obtained in Model 5 (which includes control variables of the length of stay for the whole sample of first-mover immigrants who have already reunified with their spouses in Spain), Model 6 (which includes only reunified first-movers who have lived in Spain for five years or less) and Model 7 (which includes only reunified first-movers who have lived in Spain for more than five years). As can be seen, in the model restricted only to immigrants who have resided in Spain for more than five years, immigrants from all regions of origin took longer to reunify with their spouses than EU-25 citizens, which is as expected according to the substantial differences in the legal regime applicable to EU citizens and third-country nationals. However, in Model 6, which is restricted to reunified couples in which the first-mover has lived in Spain for less than six years, no significant differences appear with regard to the speed in the process of reunification between EU citizens and Ecuadorians and other (mostly) Latin Americans.

Finally, neither having children before migration nor the number of persons who live in the dwelling (taken as an approximation of household size in Spain) appears significantly related to the speed of the spousal reunification process.

According to the results obtained so far, enough reasons exist to question the idea that family reunification (in this case, spousal reunification) is practiced exclusively by immigrants who have reached a certain economic stability and social integration in the country of destination, unless we consider immigrants who arrived only two years ago as being fully integrated into Spanish society. Similarly, the belief that the increasing number of applications for family reunification in Spain is signalling the beginning of a new phase in the immigration process appears somewhat naive; rather, it seems that a large share of immigrants coming during the last decade have actually conceived of their trip to Spain as part of a wider family strategy in which the two spouses worked from almost the very beginning. Doubtless, the very particular conditions in which immigration to Spain has taken place over the last decade (i.e. high growth rates accompanied by generous and repeated regularisation programmes)

are partially responsible for the extension of such a family migration strategy among our recent newcomers. An interesting question in this regard is to what extent this specific set of incentives has altered the labour behaviour of different types of migrants. People who migrate to another country following their spouses have traditionally been assumed to migrate for family reasons and therefore to not participate in the labour market (especially women). Is this also the case in Spain?

### **8.5 The labour market behaviour of foreigners according to their family migration status**

Beyond the implications that family-linked migration may have for the border-control side of immigration policy, one of the main public concerns surrounding family migration and, more specifically, family reunification, has to do with its potential impact on the host labour market and the overall economy. If immigrants admitted on the basis of family reunification provisions wish – and are allowed – to work in the country of destination, a potential manpower surplus, especially in those sectors in which immigrant workers are concentrated, might end up generating undesirable tension. On the other hand, if immigrants admitted through family reunification do not want to work, or are not allowed to, an increase in the dependency ratio among the immigrant population is expected and, potentially, an increased burden on the social assistance programmes as well.

As can be seen in Table 8.5,<sup>10</sup> labour performance of immigrants greatly varies by sex. As expected, immigrant women systematically display lower activity and employment rates, and a higher percentage of the unemployed. On average, the activity rate is 26 percentage points higher among foreign men than women, whereas unemployment is five points higher for women than men (see first column).

Labour performance also varies by family migration status.<sup>11</sup> As can be observed in Table 8.5, reunified spouses are the group with the lowest activity and employment rates for both men and women. Note, however, that the activity rate of reunified wives is virtually the same as the average activity rate for Spanish women aged between sixteen and 64. In contrast, first-movers who have already joined their spouses in Spain are the ones with the highest activity and employment percentages for both sexes. In any case, differences across family-migration status groups are larger among women than men, a fact that confirms the gendered nature of the migration process. On the other hand, some of the most striking figures in Table 8.5 are those for mixed couples; in spite of being traditionally portrayed as the most integrated individuals, foreigners married to Spanish spouses present the highest unemployment percentage among women and the second-highest among men.

**Table 8.5** *Percentage of non-active, employed and unemployed married foreigners, by sex and family migration status*

	Total		First-mover who has not reunified with spouse yet		First-mover who has already reunified with spouse		Reunified spouse		Couple migration		Mixed couple	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Active	94	68	92	85	97	85	90	57	92	76	94	64
Employed	81	51	79	74	83	78	73	41	81	58	80	41
Unemployed	7	13	6	11	8	6	11	13	5	11	10	17
N	2,346		220		482		482		698		484	

Source: LFS (2006, second quarter; author's own elaboration)

Given the numerical importance of mixed marriages in Spain and their potential meaning for the whole integration process, the characteristics of spouses in these mixed couples should be analysed more in detail to determine the reasons behind these unexpected results.

In order to investigate whether the differences in Table 8.5 do effectively reflect actual differences in the labour behaviour of migrants who came to Spain following different family trajectories, I carried out multivariate analyses for men and women separately to study the probability of being active, employed and unemployed after controlling for differences in age, level of education, length of residence and region of origin. As can be seen in Table 8.6 and Table 8.7, the obtained results generally confirm that the type of family migration is associated with differences in the individuals' labour behaviour in the country of destination, especially for women. In fact, in the case of men (see Table 8.6), the only category significantly different from the rest is the group of first-movers who have already been joined by their wives; they are the most likely to be active and employed compared to men who arrived in Spain after their wives (reference category). In contrast, the obtained results for the sub-sample of women reveal a highly variegated situation. Unlike their male counterparts, age, education and origin make significant differences in foreign women's likelihood of being active and employed (see first and third columns, Table 8.7).

**Table 8.6** *Logit model predicting the probability of being active, employed and unemployed, by family migration status: Men (coefficients and standard errors)*

Age (reference age 17-25)						
Age 26-35	0.27*	0.25†	0.16†	0.15†	-0.13	-0.13
	0.14	0.14	0.09	0.09	0.14	0.14
Age 36-55	-0.00*	-0.00*	-0.00†	-0.00†	0.00	0.00
	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Education (reference tertiary)						
Less than primary school	-0.45	-0.48	-0.27	-0.30	0.01	0.14
	0.50	0.52	0.32	0.33	0.44	0.46
Less than lower secondary	0.19	0.18	0.00	-0.01	-0.04	0.02
	0.47	0.47	0.27	0.28	0.38	0.39
Less than upper secondary	-0.18	-0.14	-0.09	-0.08	-0.33	-0.27
	0.45	0.46	0.28	0.28	0.43	0.43
Less than tertiary	-0.08	-0.05	0.09	0.10	-0.39	-0.35
	0.40	0.40	0.24	0.25	0.36	0.36
Other secondary	-0.08	-0.06	0.47	0.44	-0.94	-0.80
	0.62	0.63	0.45	0.46	0.78	0.78
Duration of residence (reference less than 1 year of residence)						
1-2 years	-1.33*	-1.40*	-0.80†	-0.54	0.47	0.46
	0.59	0.62	0.44†	0.46	0.63	0.67
3-5 years	-0.84†	-0.51	-0.32	-0.14	-0.02	0.07
	0.49	0.51	0.31	0.32	0.44	0.47
6-9 years	-0.42	-0.20	0.11	0.21	-0.37	-0.26
	0.40	0.42	0.34	0.26	0.35	0.37
10 or more years	-0.35	-0.25	-0.02	0.00	-0.25	-0.17
	0.40	0.41	0.24	0.24	0.33	0.34
Citizenship category (reference EU-25)						
Maghreb	-0.12	-0.41	-0.41	-0.54†	1.29*	1.34*
	0.41	0.43	0.28	0.29	0.50	0.52
Non-Maghreb Africa	0.80	0.61	-0.12	-0.24	1.30*	1.42*
	0.69	0.71	0.37	0.38	0.58	0.59
Romania	0.88†	0.67	0.66†	0.57	0.05	0.12
	0.30	0.31	0.34	0.35	0.64	0.66
Ecuador	0.71	0.61	0.24	0.21	0.05	0.10
	0.57	0.58	0.34	0.35	0.68	0.70
Others	0.55	0.42	-0.09	-0.14	1.28*	1.29*
	0.37	0.37	0.25	0.26	0.47	0.48
Position in the reunification process (reference reunified spouse)						
First-mover pending reunification	0.22			0.49		-0.79
	0.53			0.35		0.53
First-mover who has already reunified	1.03*			0.74*		-0.36
	0.51			0.31		0.44
Couple migration	-0.08			0.27		-0.56
	0.45			0.30		0.45
Mixed couple	0.31			0.38		-0.02
	0.56			0.35		0.49
Constant	-1.41	-1.38	-1.20	-1.52	-0.70	-0.46
	2.68	2.78	1.78	1.84	2.69	2.82
N	1142	1142	1142	1142	1142	1142
Log-likelihood	-254	-249	-532	-528	-288	-286

Source: LFS (2006, second quarter)

\* Significant at 95%

† Significant at 90%

**Table 8.7** *Logit model predicting the probability of being active, employed and unemployed by family migration status: Women (coefficients and standard errors)*

	Active	Active	Em- ployed	Em- ployed	Unem- ployed	Unem- ployed
<b>Age (reference aged 17-25)</b>						
Aged 26-35a	0.24* 0.07	0.23* 0.07	0.23* 0.07	0.22* 0.07	0.00 0.09	0.03 0.09
Aged 36-55	-0.00* 0.00	-0.00* 0.00	-0.00* 0.00	-0.00* 0.00	0.00 0.00	-0.00 0.00
<b>Education (reference tertiary)</b>						
Less than primary school	-1.12* 0.30	-1.19* 0.31	-0.60* 0.30	-0.77* 0.32	-0.65 0.40	-0.54 0.41
Less than lower secondary	-0.34 0.26	-0.36 0.26	0.09 0.23	0.01 0.24	-0.15 0.31	-0.06 0.32
Less than upper secondary	-0.50* 0.24	-0.57* 0.24	-0.06 0.21	-0.16 0.21	-0.33 0.30	-0.26 0.30
Less than tertiary	-0.42* 0.21	-0.51* 0.22	-0.02 0.18	-0.16 0.19	-0.25 0.26	-0.13 0.26
Other secondary	-0.25 0.37	-0.18 0.37	-0.54 0.33	-0.48 0.34	0.59 0.40	0.63 0.40
<b>Duration of residence (reference less than 1 year of residence)</b>						
1-2 years	-0.91* 0.34	-0.94* 0.36	-1.05* 0.35	-1.19* 0.37	0.47 0.45	0.69 0.47
3-5 years	-0.23 0.26	-0.20 0.27	-0.30 0.25	-0.38 0.27	0.40 0.35	0.62 0.37
6-9 years	-0.04 0.23	-0.04 0.24	-0.11 0.22	-0.18 0.23	0.05 0.33	0.22 0.34
10 or more	0.11 0.24	-0.04 0.25	-0.18 0.23	-0.39 0.24	0.26 0.34	0.42 0.35
<b>Citizenship category (reference EU-25)</b>						
Maghreb	-0.53* 0.25	-0.54* 0.26	-1.03* 0.26	-1.23* 0.28	0.75* 0.38	0.92* 0.39
Non-Maghreb Africa	0.51 0.38	0.59 0.39	-0.31 0.37	-0.38 0.39	1.54* 0.46	1.73* 0.48
Romania	1.43* 0.28	1.41* 0.28	0.93* 0.24	0.83* 0.25	0.69† 0.37	0.90* 0.38
Ecuador	1.24* 0.29	1.19* 0.30	0.84* 0.26	0.68* 0.27	0.43 0.41	0.61 0.42
Others	0.94* 0.21	0.92* 0.21	0.53* 0.20	0.47* 0.20	0.63* 0.32	0.64* 0.32
<b>Position in the reunification process (reference reunified spouse)</b>						
First-mover pending reunification		1.41* 0.36		1.36* 0.30		-0.04 0.40
First-mover who has already reunified		1.37* 0.36		1.62* 0.33		-0.69 0.50
Couple migration		0.43* 0.19		0.27 0.17		-0.01 0.24
Mixed couple		0.02 0.20		-0.30 0.19		0.63* 0.25
Constant	-3.64 1.32	-3.66 1.28	-4.06 1.20	-3.69 1.26	-2.77 1.57	-3.77 1.63
Log-likelihood	1204	1204	1204	1204	1204	1204
N	-637.60	-639.23	-745.83	-713.56	-436.78	-430.41

Source: LFS (2006, second quarter)

Notes: \* Significant at 95%

† Significant at 90%



In addition, with regard to family migration status, foreign women who arrived in Spain several years after their husbands (reference category) are the group least likely to be active and employed on the Spanish labour market, along with foreign women married to Spanish men (see the non-significant coefficients for the variable 'mixed couple' in second and fourth columns), which are also the most likely to be unemployed (see the significant positive coefficient for 'mixed couple' in sixth column).

## 8.6 Conclusion

The obtained results demonstrate that family-linked migration, particularly spousal reunification, has been substantial among the foreign population living in Spain, contrary to what is suggested by official statistics and the Spanish government. In fact, LFS data (2006) indicate that more than 80 per cent of married foreigners already live together with their spouses in Spain and, moreover, that it took very little time for them to reunify. Some of the main factors explaining these findings have to do with a soft enforcement of immigration internal controls and the realisation of successive regularisation programs since 2000, which have created a pervasive structure of incentives to practice family reunification on the fringes of the law. In addition, the recent accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU might also underlie the unexpectedly large volume and quick pace of spousal reunification among foreign couples in Spain. However, the cross-sectional structure of our data recommends some caution in interpreting the obtained results, which should be confirmed by further analyses using synthetic cohorts and longitudinal data.

The relevance of these results derives not only from their implications for immigration control policy, but also from their potential effects on the host labour market and the overall integration process of immigrants in Spain. To the extent that differences in the way in which immigrants organise their families' process of migration appear to be associated with significant differences in their labour performance, especially for women, rules allocating visas and work permits to foreigners should start taking these facts into account.

## Notes

- 1 Note that EU citizens enjoy a privileged family reunification legal regime, according to which there is no requirement of previous residence for the applicant or visa for the relatives (Royal Decree 178/2003, recently derogated by Royal Decree 240/2007 from 16 February on the entry, free movement and residence in Spain

- of EU citizens, in force since 2 April 2007). The Danish legislation has changed since 2008.
- 2 The Spanish legislation does not differentiate between family reunification and family formation; official statistics do not either.
  - 3 Newspapers and NGOs have periodically reported cases of unjustified delays and rejections of visa applications for family reunification in Spain by the consulates abroad (El País 9 February 2008).
  - 4 This situation has changed, as of March 2008. Now legally sponsored relatives (not only spouses) who have lived in Spain for less than one year are allowed to register as unemployed at public employment offices. However, this does not imply immediate open access to the labour market, but rather the mere chance to find an employer who may want to hire them and accordingly support the application for a work permit.
  - 5 This survey was conducted by the INE between November 2006 and February 2007. The sample was randomly selected from the population register to include 15,500 individuals born in a foreign country who were aged sixteen and up, regardless of their legal status and nationality. Additional information is available at <http://www.ine.es/jaxi/menu.do?type=pcaxis&path=%2Ft20%2Fp319&file=inebase&L=>.
  - 6 The survey collects information only on those individuals who live in the dwelling, thus implying that spouses who remained in their homelands are not included in the sample and that information on them is missing.
  - 7 As of 1 January 2007, Romanian nationals can enter and reside in other EU countries, although they still must obtain a work permit if they wish to work legally in the host country.
  - 8 Outliers are defined as values of the variable of interest that are larger than 1.5 times the difference between the first and third quartiles of the distribution.
  - 9 Since 1991, a visa has been compulsory for Moroccan nationals entering Spain. By contrast, nationals from most Latin American countries are not required to have a visa. The visa obligation was more recently imposed on nationals from Colombia (2001), Ecuador (August 2003) and Bolivia (April 2007).
  - 10 In Table 8.5 and the analyses that follow, the sample is larger than prior as first-movers' spouses and immigrants married to Spanish partners are now both included.
  - 11 Married couples whose spouses arrived in Spain the same year are classified under 'couple migration', in order to investigate whether arriving together has a distinct labour pattern or not. In the previous section, these couples were classified as couples who took less than one year to reunify.

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## **Section III**

Marriage migration and gender relations



## 9 Cross-border marriage as a migration strategy: Thai women in the Netherlands

*Panitee Suksomboon*

### 9.1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In the context of more restrictive immigration policies across Europe and the Netherlands, in particular, marriage migration and more broadly family-related migration have become the most accessible and feasible mode to enter the Netherlands. Women married to a Dutch husband are actually by far the largest group of Thai immigrants in the Netherlands. Many traditional accounts of marriage migration have highlighted the economic disparity between poorer countries in the global South and rich, developed countries in the global North as the main stimulus driving brides from poorer countries to marry grooms in wealthier ones. This chapter deconstructs these simplistic and mechanistic notions. It demonstrates that economic motivations are constructed around imaginations about the affluent and modern European society and the high value Thai people assign to living overseas, and are thus deeply influenced by cultural ideas about marriage, migration and Europe. The popularity of tourism in Thailand, the advancement in communication technology, changed attitudes towards mixed marriage, fantasies about gender and sexuality and local constraints on marriage opportunities – combined with the women's social positions – all have a great impact in shaping marriage migration. This chapter also touches upon the immigration regulations of the Netherlands, which render intermarriage as a particular route for Thai immigration and generate a power imbalance among Thai-Dutch couples by making the women dependent on their Dutch spouse's support of their legal residency (see also Fleischer and Riaño this volume).

I believed that if I went abroad, I would have a better life. I thought that Western countries are paradise. I saw some of my female co-villagers who went to Germany or Switzerland sending remittances back home to build a new house and to buy modern furniture or a car in Thailand. Although I had no idea what kind of work they did and how their lives overseas were, I still wish that one day my dream of going overseas will become true. After I had followed my Dutch boyfriend to the Netherlands, I just realised that the reality of living in Europe entirely differs from what I imagined. But I am already

here. What else can I do? I only work hard and put up with all difficulties, otherwise I have to return to Thailand with nothing and I will lose face. (Suwipa, interviewed in November 2005)<sup>2</sup>

Thai men might be afraid of marrying me because they see me as a highly educated woman. I myself also didn't want to marry a man who is unsuitable [in terms of education and economic status] for me. Even though I wanted to have my own family, I thought again and again before I married Geert and moved to the Netherlands. My parents at first did not approve my decision to marry him. They wondered whether he was really committed to the relationship. They were also concerned that I had to quit my profession. I had worked as a government official in a high position for several years. I had to sacrifice everything, to resign from my job and to live far away from my parents, in order to follow him to the Netherlands. (Pla, interviewed in August 2005)<sup>3</sup>

When marriage involves a bride from an economically poorer global location to marry a groom from a wealthier one, an economic approach assumes that the expected economic benefit and the opportunity for migration play a major part in the bride's decision. Yet, the interviews quoted above question such an explanation. Suwipa's and Pla's opinion about their marriage migration is ambivalent. Economic betterment may be an incentive that drives Suwipa to marry and to move, but why did her experience contradict her expectation? Or if the women opt for marriage for migration opportunity or economic benefit, as the economic view claims, why did Pla first face her parents' objection? And why was Pla herself reluctant to marry her Dutch spouse and migrate to the Netherlands?

This chapter argues that it is too simplistic to highlight the material gain and economic disparity between sending and receiving countries as the only stimulus. Such an approach overlooks the interrelation between historical, social and cultural influences that motivate or hinder female marriage migration. It also downplays the role of gender specificity, the differences in social positions of the women and the extent to which they exert their agency to make cross-border marriage feasible. By taking both economic and socio-cultural determinants and a gender perspective into account, this chapter aims to explore what shapes and limits marriage migration of Thai women in the Netherlands and how their different social positions – such as age, educational level, economic standing and past marital status – and their agency affect their decision and experience of marriage migration.



## 9.2 Thai migrant women in the Netherlands

Before the late 1970s, Thai international migration to Europe was insignificant. In the Netherlands, an exception to this was one of the first small overseas movements of the group of so-called Siamese Brides, who in 1945 – after the Second World War – married Dutch prisoners of war and later moved to the Netherlands or Indonesia (Ten Brummelhuis 2004; Ooms 2004). The second wave started in the late 1970s and is made up of much higher figures than the former group.<sup>4</sup> This migration involves marriage to a Dutch partner and was the result of globalisation, mass tourism in Thailand, economic difficulties in agriculture at home and an increased labour demand in the service sector in urban Thailand. Peasant women with little education noticeably constitute the main group of this second flow, but more educated, middle-class women have recently also participated in this mobility.<sup>5</sup> Regardless of their social and economic status, cross-border marriage is still the most common means that Thai women use to move to the Netherlands. Yet, the way they initiate contact with their prospective spouse becomes more varied, for instance, through social networks or internet chat.

A pattern of Thai women marrying European men suggests that contemporary Thai migration to European countries such as Germany (Pra-pairat 2003), Denmark (Lisborg 2002), Switzerland (Boonmathya 2005) and, notably, the Netherlands has become highly feminised. In the Netherlands, the total number of persons with a Thai background<sup>6</sup> was 14,261 in 2008 and thus has almost tripled since 1996, when the number was 5,576. In 2008, 10,210 or around 71.6 per cent of persons with a Thai background were women. Between 1996 and 2008, the number of women actually increased slightly – from 69.3 to 71.6 per cent. Among first-generation migrants, the share of women is even higher and has increased from 78.2 per cent in 1996 to 81 per cent in 2008 (CBS 2008). In contrast to immigrants in the Netherlands from many other countries of origin, Thai women thus considerably exceed their male counterparts, a phenomenon shared only with the Philippines. The majority of Thai women who migrate to the Netherlands are in their mid-twenties to late thirties and thus of marriageable age.

## 9.3 Research methodology and data collection

For this study, I used a qualitative approach with ethnographic research methods. My data primarily draws on in-depth interviews and open-ended questions with 45 Thai women and thirteen male spouses (eleven Dutch, one Surinamese and one Norwegian).<sup>7</sup> One year of intensive field-work was conducted in 2005. I conducted all the interviews in Thai or

English. Participant observation – such as eating with the women, visiting their homes, working with them at Thai restaurants and participating in Thai festivals – enabled me to acquire more data and to understand how the women define and negotiate their social lives. I applied the snowball sampling technique to trace the women's social networks by asking them to introduce me to their kin, friends and acquaintances. I also attempted to diversify my informants by considering various attributes such as age, present and past marital status, educational level, social class, duration of stay in the Netherlands and present and past occupations.

The women in my sample are between 24 and 57 years old. The majority, 30 persons in total, are between 30 and 40 years old. They originate from all regions of Thailand.<sup>8</sup> The majority is from the north-east (24 persons), while fifteen women come from Bangkok and the central region, three from the south and three from the north. Half of my respondents were single and half were divorced or separated from a former Thai husband. Nineteen women have children who were born to a former Thai husband. As to their educational background, twelve finished primary school, nineteen graduated from a secondary or vocational school and ten acquired a Bachelor's degree at a university in Thailand. The remaining four persons received a Master's degree in Thailand, the US or the Netherlands. The length of their stay in the Netherlands varies from one to seventeen years. After living in the Netherlands, seven women divorced or separated from their former Dutch partners, and all of them later remarried. Thirteen women have a marriage certificate, three have a marriage contract and the rest cohabit without a contract or marriage certificate.

The ages of the women's husbands range from 30 to 65. Nine men had never had any girlfriend or wife before they met their Thai wife, while the rest (36 persons) had lived with a Dutch, Italian, German, English, Indonesian, Thai, Surinamese or African wife or girlfriend. Seven men have children who were born to their former partner. Occupations of the Dutch husbands are diverse, including lawyer, pilot, computer technician, office manager, electrician, security guard, factory worker and construction worker. A few are already retired.

The names of all informants I mention in this chapter are pseudonyms. It should be stated that the data from a small number of the women and the Dutch men I interviewed may not be sufficient to allow for a generalisation of the findings, but they provide a deep understanding of daily experiences and perceptions of the women and their Dutch partners.

#### 9.4 What shapes and delimits marriage migration of Thai women in the Netherlands

Theoretical perspectives have been developed to explain why people opt for marriage migration and what influences their motivation and decisions. Initially, an economic approach privileged a focus on micro-analysis, regarding marriage as an individual's rational choice, in which people marry to maximise their expected financial security and well-being. They decide to marry when it brings them higher utility than remaining single (Gorny & Kepinska 2004: 355; Becker 1993; Kofman, Kraler, Kohli & Schmoll this volume). Yet, this view overstates an individual rationality and ignores the engagement of other social actors in decision-making in marriage and migration.

The economic paradigm extends its unit of analysis to the macro-level, claiming that economic gain and an opportunity for spatial mobility are particularly a crucial incentive to move and to marry for women with little education and from rural backgrounds. It also underlines the role of push-pull factors. On the one hand, economic difficulties and their relatively lower competence in accessing resources and well-paid occupations in the country of origin may push the women to migrate. On the other hand, the high cost of international migration and the more restricted immigration and employment regulations in the receiving country may hinder geographical movement and participation in the global labour market of these disadvantaged women (Fan & Huang 1998; Humbeck 1996). Marrying a groom who resides in a well-developed and prosperous country, thus, appears to be the most feasible instrument for these women to enter such destinations and to receive legal residence and employment opportunities. This perspective has some limitations, insofar as it overemphasises economic benefit as the only motivation and it perceives the women as a homogeneous group. There is much evidence to show that in the context of restrictive migration policies, which provide migration opportunity for only few highly qualified migrants with high income, marriage might be an easier option to gain legitimate entrance, residency and social mobility, including for relatively educated women such as Filipinos (Mckay 2003; Parreñas 2001; Van den Muijzenberg 2002) and Vietnamese (Thai 2005).

A growing literature links the economic approach with geography in order to highlight the interplay between geographical hierarchy and economic disparity between two countries, as these can both facilitate and limit the marriage market. In other words, males who occupy a favourable position in the spatial hierarchy are able to draw women from poorer locales, whilst those who live in peripheral areas are at a disadvantage (Abelmann & Kim 2005; Lavelly 1991; Li & Lavelly 1995: 293). Cross-border marriage is related to what is called 'spatial hypergamy', in which such

marriage creates an upward socio-economic and geographical mobility for the bride. This explanation, however, ignores other social and cultural determinants that also characterise the flux and form of intermarriage and migration. It also overlooks the influence of gender specificity on the different experiences and decisions in the marriage migration of men and women. Constable (2005) and Freeman (2005) question the term 'spatial hypergamy' and argue that moving to the wealthier and more developed country cannot simply imply an upward social and economic mobility. They point out a 'paradoxical hypergamy' in which other social factors – gender, class, ethnicity, nationality, etc. – greatly affect the women's experience and perception of marriage and mobility. For instance, they observe that in some circumstances, the well-educated, middle-class women from the less developed country may undergo upward geographical mobility by marrying and moving to the more developed destination. They may experience, nonetheless, downward occupational and class mobility, since in the receiving country they have difficulty in procuring a skilled job, or they may learn that the social and economic status of their husband and kin are lower than their own in the country of origin.

To fill the gap, a gendered approach is brought to analyse the impact of gender differences on women's marriage migration. Constable (2005: 3-4) argues that rather than solely economic motivation, 'marriages that cross the border of nation-states form marriage-scapes that are shaped and limited by existing and emerging cultural, social, historical and political factors'. Some scholars add that the way in which women experience social pressure and family obligation differs from men – for instance, in their experiences of divorce, being a single mother and finding economic betterment from an overseas income – may motivate the women to marry and to move altogether (Harzig 2001; Sharpe 2001). The women, moreover, may apply geographical mobility and marriage to deal with pressure on, and conflict in, local marriage constraints, to resist gender oppression at home, or escape from family control (Ortiz 1996; Pedraza 1991). In particular, this perspective examines how gender specificity and differences in socio-economic standing affect the women's experience and perception both before and after marriage migration. Pessar and Mahler (2001: 5-8) draw on the notion of 'gendered geographies of power' to demonstrate that 'gender operates simultaneously on multiple spatial and social scales (e.g. the body, the family, the state)'. They emphasise the role of 'social location' – a person's positions within power hierarchies created through historical, political, economic, geographic, kinship-based and other socially stratifying factors, in shaping the migrants' motivation, experience and perception. They further stress the importance of 'type and degrees of agency' people exert, given their social location. In other words, while people's accessibility to resources and geographical movement is shaped and constrained by their social location, they simultane-

ously can exercise their agency as initiators of these conditions, including the cognitive process such as imagining, planning and designing strategies.

In what follows I examine historical and economic relations and other social and cultural factors within Thai and Dutch society that facilitate or constrain the marriage migration of Thai women to the Netherlands.

#### 9.4.1 *The popularity of tourism in Thailand*

In the absence of colonial ties or refugee-related flows, Thai migration to Europe had been negligible before the 1970s. Thai migrants spatial movement to European destinations is a quite recent phenomenon, which is associated with globalisation, capital flow and tourism in Thailand. Tourism and entertainment services attract many foreigners to visit and are one of the most significant means that create encounters between Thai women and foreign men. The emergence of this industry is inextricably linked to the Thai contact with American troops during the Vietnam War in the 1960s and the 1970s and the government's strategies to promote tourism as a measure to earn foreign exchange since the 1980s. During the Vietnam War, Thailand served as a major destination for the R&R ('rest and recreation') holidays of American servicemen, consequently generating the growth of prostitution and the entertainment business.<sup>9</sup> Some interaction between Thai women and American servicemen occurred under the rubric of the *miachoa*, literally the 'hired wife',<sup>10</sup> in which servicemen lived with local women and received sexual, emotional and housekeeping services in exchange for money, upkeep and/or gifts (Cohen 1996; Jeffrey 2002). The servicemen usually left their Thai wife and *luk-khrueng* children, referring to those of mixed European-Thai parentage, in Thailand when they returned to the US. The end of the Vietnam War and the withdrawal of the American troops from Thailand in 1975 caused a high unemployment rate, especially in the construction and entertainment sectors. While a group of peasant males, particularly from north-east Thailand, was recruited to work in the Middle East in the early 1980s, the women who had been *miachoa* or prostitutes migrated to Bangkok or the south and some took up a job in sex-related sectors. Economic difficulties in rural areas and an increased demand for female labour in the industrial and service sectors in the 1980s is another force that pushed the rural women to move and seek employment. Combined with the government's promotion of Thai tourism, such as the proclamation of 1987 as Visiting Thailand Year or 2000 as Amazing Thailand Year, tourist and sex businesses were unavoidably one of the sectors that absorbed the female labour market and that generated a chance for women to meet foreign men, which could later lead to marriage and migration.

The data acquired during my research demonstrate that the popularity

of Thai tourism certainly also opened up the chances of marriage migration for Thai women to the Netherlands. Twenty women I interviewed reported that they met their Dutch partner while he was on holiday. Of these twenty women, thirteen made contact during their work at a hotel, a restaurant or a travel agency in popular tourist areas such as Bangkok, Chiang Mai in the north or Phuket in the south; seven women knew their Dutch prospective husband through their work in sex-related businesses, such as a massage parlour or a bar. For instance, after working for three months at a beer bar in Pattaya, the central region of Thailand, Pla met her Dutch boyfriend:

He travelled with two male friends. We talked together and got along well. Probably, because he just had divorced from his Thai wife [who lived in the Netherlands] and I had just separated from my German boyfriend. I kept him company for nine days and he paid for all expenses. He also provided me extra money of 700 baht [€15]<sup>11</sup> a day.

Some men still remain in contact with the women through e-mails or telephone calls after they returned to the Netherlands. The women who speak neither Dutch nor English can overcome the limitations of their language skills by mixing both Thai and English as far as they can when speaking on the telephone with their boyfriend. Alternatively, they pay somebody who runs an internet shop to reply to e-mails on their behalf. Once their relationship is established, which can take many months up to a few years, some women receive regular allowances from their Dutch boyfriends, ranging from 4,000 to 10,000 baht (€80 to €200) a month, while others may occasionally request some financial support. The men may revisit the woman in Thailand, or some may act as a guarantor for the woman's tourist visa application and sponsor all expenses for the woman to visit the Netherlands. Later they arrange for her migration to the Netherlands.<sup>12</sup>

Although the tourism and entertainment industry is a major area for the encounter of Thai-Dutch couples, it is certainly not always the case. Large-scale investment from transnational companies during a period of economic growth in Thailand in the 1980s is another factor that gave opportunities for male foreigners to get in touch with the local women. Five educated women who worked in business companies, universities or with the government met their Dutch spouse during his work or internship in Thailand. A generalisation that the women gain contact with male foreigners through places of sexual entertainment obscures the diverse life stories of other women and undermines the heterogeneity of their social and economic background.

#### 9.4.2 *Improved communication technology and transportation*

Not only tourism, but also contact via internet websites and chat rooms is another recently significant source that opens up the chance for Thai women to create and maintain a relationship with a Western man and vice versa, and this may later promote the flow of marriage migration. This possibility is a result of globalisation and the advent of technology in telecommunication and transportation that generates the increased time-space compression (Constable 2005; Guarnizo & Smith 2002; Basch, L., N. Glick Schiller & C. Szanton Blanc 1994; Kofman et al. this volume). Twelve women initiated contact with their Dutch husband through introduction service websites or internet chat rooms. Both men and women can register on these sites by uploading their photo and completing a short biography giving nickname, age, height, weight, place of residence, occupation and hobbies, coupled with a short explanation of what kind of person they are seeking.<sup>13</sup> Some websites are created on a non-profit basis; the men who want to make contact and to get information regarding the women they are attracted to can find their e-mail address directly on the websites. In the case of profit-making sites, the men must pay the website owners, by credit card, before obtaining information about a woman.

In internet chat rooms,<sup>14</sup> the women can choose what age, nationality and occupation the man with whom they want to chat should possess; the men can do the same. Later they send the respondent an e-mail to introduce themselves. If the other person replies, then contact between them officially begins and they may exchange photos. At first, the women may chat with many men who are from various countries, such as the US, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Australia and Japan, and the men do so with many European, African or Asian women. Later, their contacts become less frequent because they limit their correspondence to the few with whom they have a lot of conversations, enjoy talking with and with whom they share similar interests. When the frequency of the chat room conversations or the e-mails increases, more personal communication via telephone or webcam starts.

Inevitably, the 'mail-order bride' concept and its negative connotations get connected with the courtship created through a dating website and that the women are regarded as a commodity who lack agency. The women I interviewed were aware of such a connotation, but they seem to perceive an advantage of contact through the internet and the degree of choice that was controlled by them. In this 'cyber room', they came to know new Western male friends without exposing their personal life in the first stage of communication and enjoyed gaining minor gifts such as a bottle of perfume, a small package of cosmetics or a piece of chocolate from men with whom they were chatting. They were also able to decide with whom – or whether – they would keep or terminate contact. Some

women perceived chatting with men who are *farang* – the generic word Thais use to refer to white Westerners – as a strategy to gain an opportunity for international migration, should their relationship develop and become more committed. Nipa's story exemplifies this.

A Thai woman went to an internet shop with her American husband during their trip to Thailand. In the shop, she turned to me and we started a conversation. She later asked 'Do you often use the internet? Why don't you talk with a *farang* man? You should try, because you do not have to invest anything in it. If you are lucky to meet a good one, he may take you to live overseas.' She gave me the name of two dating websites. At that time, I was bored with my job. I had worked as an accountant for five years, but my salary had almost not increased. I applied as a member of this website. Afterwards, I got a lot of e-mails from many *farang* men. In this way, I found Lucas, who later became my partner.

After communicating several months to a couple of years, some men may consider making a trip to meet the woman face-to-face in Thailand. The differences in levels of economic development between Europe and Thailand, the attractive exchange rate between the euro and the Thai baht and the lower cost of living in Thailand allow the Dutch men to afford the travelling and accommodation expenses and to treat their girlfriend on a date or whilst on holiday in Thailand. If their relationship is longstanding, a Dutch man may decide to bring the woman to the Netherlands.

#### 9.4.3 *Physical attraction and fantasies about gender, sexuality and modernity*

Marriage between Thai-Dutch couples is moulded by physical attraction and imaginations about gendered stereotypes of 'Asian' women and 'Western' men. The distinct features of Asian women such as hair colour, eyes and skin possibly make them look attractive to Western men. Also, Thai and other Asian women tend to be stereotyped as tender, submissive and traditional, which lures the men. Some even search for these qualities since the women in their own countries are viewed as too liberal and more demanding.<sup>15</sup> The stereotype of being a *farang* man attracts Thai women as well. Nineteen women in my interviews, especially from a lower economic background, had faced negative experiences with Thai men, such as irresponsibility towards his family, addiction to alcohol, gambling and physical assault. They imagine the Western man as good-looking, gentle, modern and responsible. Coupled with the fantasies of a wealthy and developed country, *farang* men are identified by Thais as being well-off, because they come from more highly developed countries and spend a



fabulous life during their trip to Thailand. Images of an affluent and modern Western society are also highlighted by both the local and global media. Thai and Western television programmes, magazines and Hollywood movies frequently show scenes of big houses, luxurious cars and technological savvy in Western society. They encourage *pai muang nok* ('going abroad' especially to Europe, America, Australia and Japan) and *chai khong nok* ('owning products from abroad'). They are representative of higher social mobility and prestige because only the wealthy can afford them (Suksomboon 2005). These images seduce the women and indulge their fantasies about lifestyle overseas. The women assume that their *farang* husbands are wealthy and that marrying them and migrating to *muang nok* will offer a chance for economic improvement and a better life, even though some had their dream dashed upon arrival. Thus, marrying a *farang* man is favourable, being imagined as an instrument to secure economic and social mobility.

#### 9.4.4 Transforming opinions towards marrying a *farang* man

The shift in the perception of a relationship with a Western man and of having *luk-khrueng* children in Thailand facilitates the possibility and increases the acceptability of a Thai-Dutch couple's marriage. In some societies, a relationship with a foreign spouse is not welcomed or even prohibited, but it is feasible among Thai women. In contrast to Islam, Thai Buddhism does not exercise strict control over marriage to a partner of a different religion. The relationship between American servicemen and local Thai women in the form of *miachoa* during the Vietnam War has nonetheless caused the stigmatisation of intermarriage to a *farang* man. *Luk-khrueng* children were unacceptable, which is reflected in the Thai expression calling them '*khoa nork na*': wild seedlings that have fallen outside the dyked boundaries of the rice fields, a symbol of their illegitimacy (Reynolds 1999). During the Vietnam War and following period, a Thai woman with a *farang* husband was more likely to be suspected by other Thais as being a formerly hired wife or a prostitute, and having *luk-khrueng* children was considered undesirable.

Such stigma has slightly waned. Marrying a *farang* partner has recently come to be seen as an opportunity for international mobility from a poorer country to a more developed one and a means of achieving higher economic and social status. The women and their foreign spouses are more welcomed by the women's kin and the local authorities since the remittances the women send home improve their family's well-being and contribute to the development projects in the local community. *Luk-khrueng* teenagers have also recently acquired a privileged place in Thai society, particularly in advertising and entertainment, where Thai notions of beauty are being transformed (Reynolds 1999). They are pop-

ular on Thai television as singers, actors, models or national beauty contestants. Among many Thai women, marrying a *farang* husband and having *luk-khrueng* children has thus become acceptable or even preferable.

#### 9.4.5 *Local constraints on marriage opportunities*

Instead of just an economic consideration, the women's decisions and incentives for cross-border marriage are also determined by their social positions, which in this situation consists of age, gender, education and marital experience. Middle-aged, 'overly' educated or divorced women are more likely to be considered less marriageable by local standards. Given the norms and practices of marriage in Thai society, class endogamy is prevalent. Thai people are inclined to court and marry a partner from a similar social and economic background. Specifically, the idea of 'marrying-up' guides women to choose a spouse whose economic status and education should be slightly higher than their own. More highly educated women who are successful in their careers and reach unmarriageable age – over 35 – are possibly deemed too liberal and clever; hence, they may be undesirable for some local men. On the other hand, it is less preferable for these women to marry a Thai man with lower socio-economic standing. Since a single woman is more or less stigmatised, well-educated women in their late thirties may encounter pressure from their kin if there is no sign of their having a boyfriend or getting married. They face a dilemma when they themselves and their parents wish them to marry, but they have great difficulty in finding a suitable match. The following example from Pla is illustrative.

Before I met Geert, I was nearly 37. It is like a dream for every [Thai] woman to get married and have a husband. I am not an exceptional one. My parents also wanted me to establish my own family. But, as you know, this is difficult for women whose age is above 35 and who attained a high education. Thai men are afraid that their wife will be more intelligent and have a better education than they do.

Marrying a Dutch husband offers the women an alternative to negotiate and overcome the local constraints. Such a marriage is more attractive and acceptable for educated women than marrying a local man. It allows women a chance to form their own family and to acquire upward geographical mobility by moving to a developed and wealthy European country that is highly valued among Thais.<sup>16</sup> Yet, this does not mean that the women and their parents will immediately accept marriage and migration. The women at first are rather hesitant, as they have skilled professions and are from relatively well-off families, who can provide them

with comfortable lifestyles in Thailand. Marrying and moving to the Netherlands means that the women have to sacrifice their future by resigning from their career and leaving their social life behind. Some parents initially disagree with their daughter's decision. They are uncertain whether their potential European son-in-law is committed to the relationship.<sup>17</sup> If the daughter still insists, the parents ultimately may agree. This is seen in Tiwa's experience, when her parents first objected to her choice of a potential partner.

My parents first disagreed with my decision to marry Joos. As they saw it, I had a prestigious job. I graduated with a Master's degree and taught in the faculty of psychology at a famous university in Bangkok. I never had faced any economic difficulty and my parents' economic status was quite good. On the other hand, my husband had divorced from his Dutch wife and had one son by her. They wondered why I did not select a spouse more suitable for me. Anyhow, I was a person who knew Joos well. After we kept in touch for one year, we decided to marry. My parents, in the end, approved since he was serious about the relationship. We have lived together for four years now. This proved to my parents that I made the right choice.

Divorced and separated women, particularly those who have children, faced relatively less intervention from their parents in partner choice. Yet, they had greater difficulty remarrying a local man because they were stigmatised as being impure and unsuitable for marriage. This limited opportunity is the result of different Thai conceptions of male and female sexuality. Thai men are regarded as having a strong innate drive with a preference for frequent sexual outlet and variety. It is thus usual for them to have pre-marital sexual experiences and to search occasionally for sexual pleasure outside marriage. By contrast, 'good' Thai women are required to save their virginity for marriage, to avoid allowing more than one man to have access to their bodies and to exercise considerable self-control in their sexual expression (Harrison 1999; Knodel, VanLandingham, Saengtienchai & Pramualratana 1999).<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, there is relatively less concern about marriageable age in Dutch society and, physically, Asian women look younger than their real age in the eyes of the Dutch men. In addition, the past marital experience of a prospective partner is not seen by Dutch men as a main hindrance to marriage. Marriage to a Dutch man is therefore considered by divorced, middle-aged women as a 'rational' and favourable option to start a new life and as an opportunity for migration.

#### 9.4.6 *Restricted immigration regulations in the Netherlands*

Increased restriction of immigration policies in the EU and the Netherlands is another prominent determinant rendering cross-border marriage as a particular pattern of Thai women's migration to the Netherlands. While internal movement for citizens of the EU member states became freer, control over the non-EU citizens' mobility to Europe became more restricted, as reflected by the term 'Fortress Europe' (Kofman & Sales 1992; Kofman et al. 2000; Kofman et al. this volume). The framework for admission of non-nationals in EU member states makes it even more difficult for migrants from countries outside the EU to immigrate on the basis of a working contract.<sup>19</sup> These policies reduce the possibility of migrant women moving to Europe directly as paid workers. Thai women with little education and insufficient English skills are less competitive in this global labour market, although they wish to work and to earn an income in euros, which is a substantial amount when converted into Thai baht. A consequence of the combined impact of the legal framework for admission of non-nationals and employment regulations in EU member states, it is also difficult for highly educated Thai women to move to the EU and to obtain a skilled profession.<sup>20</sup> Rather, marrying a Dutch male citizen is one of the most feasible and most accessible ways for women to acquire legal entrance and residence and, later, an opportunity to work in the Netherlands.

The recent enactment of a new migration regulation in the Netherlands may increasingly shape the long-term flux and form of immigration to a certain degree. Since 15 March 2006, all foreigners who wish to stay in the Netherlands for longer than three months are required to pass a civic integration examination in their home country before applying for authorisation of a visa known as a *Machtiging tot Voorlopig Verblijf* (MVV).<sup>21</sup> This regulation may generate more difficulties for prospective Thai migrants with lower educational attainments and limited knowledge of English and Dutch in marrying and moving to the Netherlands.

Moreover, the immigration law, in which the non-Dutch citizens totally rely on the Dutch partner's guarantee of their legal residence during the first three years of their stay in the Netherlands, undermines the negotiating power of the migrant women and increases dependency on the spouse.<sup>22</sup> Women who suffer in their marriage must all difficulties and to remain in the relationship, otherwise they may face deportation. For instance, Ruang discussed her struggle to find a solution when she had marital problems with Jos, her former husband.

He [Jos] refused to provide me money to send home. He also often went out in the evening and left me alone at home. I was lonely. We had intense quarrels and later we didn't talk to each other. After

having stayed with him for a year, I really wanted to discontinue the relationship, but I couldn't. I didn't know anybody here [the Netherlands]. If I separated from him, where would I live? Who would guarantee my residence? I could neither return to Thailand. I have to provide money for my daughters' education. I was depressed and lost weight. I had no choice, except to remain with him. I had to wait until I could guarantee my residence.

Although the women who have stayed in the Netherlands for less than three years are eligible to continue their residence permit on conditions of a 'humanitarian nature',<sup>23</sup> many are not well informed about this rule. A few are possibly aware of it, but they may still be afraid of expulsion. This involves interpretation of the meaning of 'humanitarian nature', as in the situation of Ruang, who did not face any physical violence from Jos but who was unhappy with him because she was lonely and depressed. Jos failed to provide her with financial support or be attentive to her emotional needs. Are such reasons included in the conditions of 'humanitarian nature'? And how can the women prove this? As Grillo (this volume) notes in respect to forced marriages, psychological and emotional pressure – i.e. less visible forms of coercion – may not be considered as coercion by law and may be insufficient to establish a right of residence on humanitarian grounds.

## 9.5 Conclusion

The more restricted immigration and employment regulations in the EU and in the Netherlands make marriage to a Dutch citizen one of the most accessible means for Thai women to acquire legal entrance and residence in the Netherlands. Yet, it cannot be automatically implied that cross-border marriage as a migration strategy is shaped solely by an economic motivation. I argue that the economic view alone is insufficient to explain why women move and why intermarriage is acceptable, without considering historical, social and cultural factors. The popularity of tourism in Thailand – which has its roots in the historic R&R holidays of American servicemen during the Vietnam War, along with Thai authorities' promotion of tourism – is a major venue that offers an opportunity for Thai women and male foreigners to create relationships. The recent flow of Thai marriage migration to Europe is also a result of improved communication technology and transportation, which enables more varied and feasible options for prospective couples who live a thousand miles away to make contact and to maintain a long-distance relationship during the initial period. Their encounter nonetheless does not promise that the women will be ultimately allowed to marry. The possibility of such a

marriage has to do with the ideal of Thai Buddhism, which does not prohibit marriage to a spouse from a different ethnic and religious background, and is furthermore enhanced by the changing attitude toward mixed marriages of Thai-farang couples, which is less stigmatised than in the past. It must also be emphasised that the women's motivation of cross-border marriage is not purely governed by financial gain itself. Rather, this economic incentive is constructed around a high value of living overseas and imaginations about affluent, modern Europe among Thais. This was reflected by Suwipa's interview, as excerpted in the introduction, which expressed disillusionment between her fantasy and real living conditions in the Netherlands.

The notion of 'gendered geographies of power' (Pessar & Mahler 2001) provides a better insight. Rather than solely economic gain, gender specificity and the social positions that women occupy greatly affect the differences in their motivation, perception and kin engagement in cross-border marriage. Highly educated, middle-aged women faced a contradictory experience and a complex decision. On the one hand, they opted to marry a Dutch man to deal with pressure from the difficult task of finding a suitable match as well as the cultural ideal of hypergamy. On the other hand, they encountered their parents' rejection while they themselves simultaneously felt initial hesitance about leaving their social life and prestigious career in Thailand. Those who were divorced and/or had children from a previous relationship experienced relatively less intervention from their parents, as marriage migration was a favourable option to rebuild a new life. For women with little education and from a rural background, cross-border marriage was considered an instrument for migration and participation in the global labour market, which could later provide them and their family with financial security.

Women's motivation for intermarriage as a way to secure economic betterment, to overcome local marriage constraints or to escape from the bad experience of a previous marriage is not synonymous with lack of free will or marrying out of 'love'. Within the limitations of their social positions, the women rather exercise a certain degree of agency through imagining, and actual action, to eventually achieve marriage migration. Their incentives are a combination of fantasy about romance with a good-looking, modern and responsible Western man and an expectation of the social and economic mobility provided by cross-border marriage.

The agency that women exert to achieve cross-border marriage should not be overstated. The power of the state in the Netherlands in enacting immigration regulations is one of the significant determinants that limits women's agency and shapes the flow of migration. It also generates an imbalance of power relations between Thai-Dutch couples and women's dependency on their husbands' guarantee of their residency, particularly during the first three years of their stay in the Netherlands. The cross-

border marriages of Thai-Dutch couples presented in this chapter thus illustrate the tension that emerges between globalisation, capital flow and increased transnationalism – which create encounters between the potential partners who live in different parts of the world – and the attempt of the receiving state in forging restrictive border controls. Such interaction influences the ebb and flow of migration and affects how female migrants exercise their agency to search for possible ways to migrate within the structural, social and cultural constraints imposed from outside.

## Notes

- 1 I would like to express my gratitude to C. Risseeuw, H. ten Brummelhuis and A. Kraler for their useful comments.
- 2 Suwipa is 31 years old. After finishing three years of secondary school, she worked as a saleswoman at a department store in Bangkok. Before she began living with a Thai man, she changed jobs to work in a garment factory in Bangkok, where she worked for two years.
- 3 Pla, 54 years old, got a Bachelor's degree in educational science from a well-known university in Thailand. She worked as a government official at the Ministry of Education. Later, she received a Thai government scholarship to complete a two-year Master's degree in the same subject at the University of Missouri in the US. After graduation, she returned to work with the government and obtained a high position. She also got a nine-month scholarship to follow an applied linguistics course in Singapore.
- 4 My research only focuses on the second wave of Thai migration after the 1970s to the present.
- 5 According to many studies on Thai women in Europe (Lisborg 2002; Ten Brummelhuis 2004) as well as my own observations in the Netherlands, women from rural areas with low education comprise the majority of Thai immigrants in Europe overall and specifically in the Netherlands.
- 6 This includes the first generation and the second generation (i.e. those with at least one parent born abroad).
- 7 Two women had a Dutch boyfriend or husband before, but their relationships had ended. Later, one lived with a Surinamese man with Dutch citizenship who had been in the Netherlands for 30 years. The other started a relationship with a Norwegian man who had resided in the Netherlands for seven years.
- 8 Thailand is roughly divided into four main regions: the north, the north-east, Bangkok and the central region and the south. Because of its dry, infertile geography, the north-east is the poorest region. Its economic difficulties and landlessness are prominent factors that push job-seeking natives to other parts of Thailand.
- 9 The demand by local Thai men in this sphere should not be overlooked.
- 10 At first, *miachoa* connoted the relationship between white or African American soldiers who lived with local Thai women during the Vietnam War in the 1960s. The definition gradually changed to signify the temporary relationship between male foreigners and local female escorts hired to accompany them during their trip in Thailand. The men pay all the women's expenses, such as those for

travelling, accommodations and meals, and give them an extra sum of money, depending on what is agreed upon.

- 11 According to the June 2011 exchange rate, € 1 is equivalent to some 43.5 baht.
- 12 Some couples maintain a long-distance relationship in which a Dutch man does not bring his Thai wife to the Netherlands. Rather, the man travels back and forth to Thailand to visit his wife.
- 13 There are many websites that provide information on dating Thai women such as <http://www.asiansweetheart.net>, <http://www.thai-lao-dating.com> and <http://www.sweetsoulmate.com>.
- 14 Unlike dating websites, some internet chat services (e.g. Yahoo! Messenger, Windows Live Messenger, which was formerly MSN Messenger) do not require users to upload photos of themselves.
- 15 Some Dutch men are convinced that after the Thai-Dutch couple has lived together for a few years, his Thai wife does not conform to the stereotype of a 'typical Asian' woman, instead proving to be more independent and enterprising.
- 16 After having lived together with them, some women discovered that their husbands' economic status and education was lower than their own.
- 17 The decision to marry and the choice of whom to marry proves more flexible and less vulnerable to intervention by a woman's parents when the bride is middle-class, educated and older or she has experienced separation or divorce.
- 18 In general, women's sexual experience and control over female sexuality varies by social class. Elite and middle-class women are more strictly regulated in their behaviour, as compared with those from lower social classes.
- 19 According to EU labour law, citizens in the host country have first priority for employment. If there is no qualified person otherwise, citizens from EU member countries are eligible to apply for the job. Non-citizens of the EU member countries are entitled to pursue employment when no qualified applicants can be found in the host or any fellow EU member country (FedEE 2007). Only a few countries in Europe, such as Spain and Italy, provide working contracts to migrants from outside Europe for participation in the domestic sector (Parreñas 2001; Penninx 2006).
- 20 The labour law in a host country impacts forms of immigration. In Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, the regulation allows a migrant to immigrate on the basis of a work contract for labour in domestic services and factories. As a result, there is a noticeable flow of Thai women who work in these spheres. Nonetheless, Pattana's study (2005) suggests that the number of Thai female domestic and other workers in Singapore is minimal. Most of the Thai women he encountered during his field-work were housewives married to working or middle-class Singaporeans or foreign expatriates. In Australia, apart from marrying a citizen, working in a high-skilled occupation is another feasible path to enter this country. Thai immigration is thus varied. Some women married an Australian spouse, whereas others married a Thai man and then moved together to Australia to work in skilled occupations such as nursing or as an IT technician. Or some women may stay in Australia on the basis of a work contract and later marry an Australian, Thai or foreign partner.
- 21 This examination tests an individual's fundamental knowledge of the Dutch language and society. It is administered at the Dutch embassy in the foreigner's country of residence. Certain foreign groups are exempted from this examination (IND 2008).



- 22 Family reunification and family formation immigrants are eligible for a permit of continued residence if they have held a residence permit for three years on the basis of a certified relationship with, or marriage to, a Dutch citizen, if they have complied over those three years with conditions for the annually issued permit and if no general grounds for rejection exist otherwise. A residence permit is granted regardless of whether or not the relationship or marriage has ended and whether or not the immigrant has sufficient means of financial support (IND 2008).
- 23 If the relationship ends before the three years needed for the immigrant to secure a permit of continued residence, the immigrant may still be eligible, provided there is a combination of compelling reasons of a 'humanitarian nature', which include: the position of unmarried women in the country of origin, the social position of women in the country of origin, prospects for support in the country of origin, the support provided by a parent for children born or being educated in the Netherlands and evidence of subjection to violence (including that of a sexual nature) within the family (IND 2008).

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# 10 Marriage across space and time among male migrants from Cameroon to Germany

Annett Fleischer

## 10.1 Introduction

*Since hunters have learned to shoot without missing,  
birds have learned to fly without perching.<sup>1</sup>*

Studies on immigration and integration in Germany have so far concentrated on former guestworker groups and subsequent generations, and mainly on Turkish migrants in German society. Few studies have emphasised newer migrants groups, such as sub-Saharan Africans.<sup>2</sup> African migration to Germany becomes increasingly important and relevant, not only for the increasing number of migrants coming and attempting to stay, but also for their very different pathways and contextual settings compared to the ‘guestworker generation’.

There are four main reasons for studying African migration and, in particular, Cameroonian migration to Germany. First, sub-Saharan African migrants in Germany are a recent phenomenon. They started arriving in larger numbers in the mid-1980s, when an economic crisis hit many African countries. Second, compared with former ‘guestworker generations’, Cameroonian migrants present completely different pathways of entry and different strategies for remaining in the country of destination. Whereas guestworkers were at least temporarily welcomed and wanted as workers in Germany, African migrants are confronted with quite different legal and political conditions concerning access to the labour market, right to residency and family reunification regulations. Germany has a hierarchical system of classification and regulation, and distinguishes not only between European Union and non-EU citizens, but also between the different legal statuses of migrants (Morris 2000: 226).

From this follows a third point. Because Germany increasingly erects barriers intended to discourage assumed economic migrants from Africa, migrants are forced to develop new strategies in order to be legally included and obtain the right to work. According to the German Federal Statistical Office (2004), the majority of Cameroonian migrants enter Germany as students or asylum seekers. Due to their middle-class family backgrounds and their fairly high levels of education, one third of the registered migrants with Cameroonian nationality are currently enrolled as students

in a German university. The second largest group of Cameroonians in Germany are asylum seekers, often without any realistic chance of being granted asylum. Neither group has a long-term right to stay and work in Germany. Official statistics on Cameroonian immigrants in Germany do not contain any information on undocumented immigrants living and working in Germany. It is estimated, however, that the 'real number' of African immigrants in Germany is about 50 per cent higher than statistical reports suggest (Lentz 2002). This would mean that around 20,000 Cameroonian immigrants are living documented or undocumented in Germany.

Fourth, male Cameroonian migrants are increasingly finding it necessary to resort to marriage to a German citizen to acquire residency. Binational marriages and family reunification<sup>3</sup> are often the only means of obtaining rights to live and work in Germany. Existing studies on marriage strategies of migrants concentrate on foreign-born women entering a country of destination by relying on marriage to a native-born man (Lauser 2004; Suksomboon this volume). The marriage strategies of male migrants are highly under-researched. This chapter elaborates a specific case of marriage among Cameroonians coming to Germany, elucidating the hardships and contradictions wrought on people caught in the impossible demands that EU and German rules create.

The study is based on multi-sited ethnography in Germany and Cameroon. On this account, it contributes to the current debate on the relevance of national policy for transnational migrants. The chapter draws on interviews conducted with both German women and Cameroonian men. In doing so, it gives a broad understanding of the two – often dissonant – sides of the story. Focusing on the impact of national policies on Cameroonian men's marriage strategies, this study examines the distribution of vital events as rights to enter, stay and work in Germany. Thus, the tension between the legal framework and specific marital strategies and practices is explored. Finally, I ask what relevance binational marriage has for Cameroonian men's life course and their future plans of returning to Cameroon.

## 10.2 The remaining importance of the national

Transnational migration studies describe migrants as living simultaneously in more than one society (Glick Schiller, Nieswand, Schlee, Darieva, Yalcin-Heckmann & Foszto 1995). In this regard, the assumption is that national borders become more fluid and permeable, and that people, as well as goods and ideas, move between two or more societies (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004). Transnational migrants, also referred to as 'transmigrants', are characterised as being embedded in different cultures,

working in various nation-states and belonging to more than one society concurrently. Portes (1997: 812) defines transmigrants as persons who are 'often bilingual...move easily between different cultures, frequently maintain homes in two countries, and pursue economic, political and cultural interests that require their presence in both'. Scholars of transnational migration often emphasise the improvements and developments in the modes of transport and communication that enable migrants to travel more easily across national borders. This may be true for some migrants, but definitely not all. However, Cameroonian men can be considered transmigrants, at least to a certain extent: they have strong connections with their home country, especially through remittances, personal networks and, in some cases, marital arrangements.

Some scholars involved in transnational migration research argue that the nation-state gives away some of its power due to increasing transnational processes (Appadurai 1996; Sassen 1996, 2005), whereas others claim that the nation-state remains crucial, or becomes even more significant, for some transmigrants (Bommes 2003; Morris 2000). In line with other researchers like Bommes (2003), I argue that the legal constraints of the nation-state on some migrants are not emphasised enough in transnational migration research. National policies regulating entry, stay and work allowance continue to be crucial. Using the example of Cameroonian migrants to Germany, I demonstrate that German national policies remain relevant for transnational migration processes of non-EU citizens.

The nation-state continues to be important for some transnational migrants (mainly non-EU nationals), but less relevant for others (EU citizens). The EU attempts to protect its territory from some non-EU citizens, but facilitates the movement between its member states<sup>4</sup> (Bommes 2003). The respective nation-states within the EU act in similar ways: EU countries ease the entry and stay of other EU citizens, but erect barriers for non-EU nationals. EU citizens are free to move within the Schengen space. They are allowed to access the labour market, use educational facilities and even use the health care systems in the various member states. European member states determine not only the entry and stay of non-EU citizens, but also how they are permitted to move, work and live within the country of migration. The distinction between migrants from other EU countries and non-EU citizens is pivotal.<sup>5</sup> In this context, Bhabha (1998: 714) speaks of the 'Kafkaesque restrictions' imposed upon third-country nationals in Europe.

In Germany, regulations for employment do not apply equally to all migrants. This fact has created a hierarchical 'system of inequalities' (Morris 2000). The nationality of an immigrant and the reason for coming to Germany are crucial for any job application. In contrast to EU nationals, who are subject to European law, non-EU nationals must adhere to strict

national regulations when applying for a job, even when holding a residence permit. Migrants from outside the EU are only approved to take up employment in Germany when no German or EU citizen, and no other employee with preferential treatment (e.g. third-country nationals with longer permission to stay in Germany) can be found. The system is referred to as the Priority Principle (Vorrangprinzip). The right to apply for employment is just one example of the distinctions made between citizens from different nations and their respective legal status. It points to the remaining importance of national policies, despite rising harmonisation within the EU. In my study, I discuss the legal constraints facing some non-EU nationals using the example of Cameroonian men.

### 10.3 The legal framework of marriage

Since the early 1990s, Germany has implemented a number of immigration laws and policies to further prevent and control immigration of mainly non-EU citizens.<sup>6</sup> The grounds for non-EU citizens to enter and stay legally in Germany have been whittled down to basic human rights, such as protection from persecution and prosecution (asylum), protection of the nuclear family (e.g. family reunification) and the right to freely choose a spouse (binational marriage). Cameroonian men must increasingly resort to a combination of asylum application and family formation processes to obtain legal status, and thus receive a work permit.

#### 10.3.1 *The privilege of being married*

In order to understand the strategies and practices of Cameroonian men in Germany, it is essential to provide the reader with some historical context regarding marriage expectations and a judicial framework of laws and regulations concerning marriage in Germany.

Marriage is regulated by various social (e.g. partner choice), religious (e.g. sexual behavior or attitudes towards divorce) and juridical norms and rules (e.g. divorce or inheritance). In the past, marriage in Germany, as well as in other parts of the world, was a kind of contract between different families or lineages (Schmohl 2005). The institution of 'marriage' was viewed as the foundation of family formation and a key pillar of society. A formal legal relationship between a man and a woman was seen as ensuring various functions, such as protection, control and organisation. During the Romantic period that began at the end of the eighteenth century, it became more common to wed for emotional reasons. Love was considered an important element in the relationship between husband and wife. Romantic love was based on constancy and exclusiveness (Peuckert 2004). The so-called 'love marriage' (*Liebesheirat*) became the



ideal (*Leitbild*) in many parts of society. As one consequence, the influence of the family on partner choice became less important and the legitimacy of divorce had to be accepted (Schmohl 2005).

According to Peuckert (2004) and others, a long-lived, monogamous marriage was the social norm in the 1950s and 1960s. It was considered 'normal and self-evident' that adult men and women marry in order to form a family. In the 1970s and 1980s, the importance of marriage slowly started to decline in both parts of Germany, and non-marital unions became more common. In the past two decades, the registered number of weddings in Germany decreased and the number of divorces increased (Peuckert 2004). While marriage has been losing both legal and social relevance for many German citizens, ironically, it has become essential – often the last resort – for immigrants who have no other way of staying.

### 10.3.2 *Binational marriages*

For those people in Germany who do choose to marry, marriage in Germany is regulated by art. 6 of the Basic Law (Grundgesetz). This means that the institution of 'marriage' is under special protection of the state; it is not a private or personal issue once it comes down to the official marriage ceremony at the civil registry office (the Standesamt). Marriage has consequences for both partners. The legal status of a person changes once he or she is married. Generally, there are some financial benefits for married individuals, such as lower taxes or health insurance costs.

Marriage has special significance for non-Germans. Foreigners who marry a German spouse receive, first of all, a temporary residency that enables them to work; later on, they can apply for an unlimited settlement permit. It is not surprising, then, that special regulations apply to marriages between a German and a non-German citizen. By marrying a German citizen, the foreign partner first obtains a temporary residency and a work permit (Foreigner Law paragraph 23 (§17 section 1)). After three years of marriage, the non-German spouse can apply for permanent residency (§ 28 section 2 Foreigner Law). The issuance of a permanent residence permit is contingent upon the ability of the applicant to finance his or her own living, without relying on social benefits.

Following a change in law that came into effect on 1 June 2000, the foreign spouse is able to obtain, after two years, a right to residency that is independent of his or her marriage's continuity with the German spouse (*Eigenständiges Aufenthaltsrecht*).<sup>7</sup> This means that, after two years of marriage to a German spouse, the foreign partner can stay in Germany even if the couple is about to divorce (§ 31 Foreigner Law). The independent residency right enables the immigrant to stay in Germany temporarily. After five years of independent residency and meeting other requirements, there is the possibility to apply for a permanent residence permit. Prior to

2000, the marriage had to have lasted for four years before being able to invoke the independent residency right.

The right to marry depends, among other things, on the legal status of a foreigner. Marriage to an undocumented migrant living in Germany is almost impossible. The civil registry office will report the 'illegal status' of the immigrant to the immigration office (Ausländerbehörde), which means that the foreigner can be arrested and deported immediately (Rose 2001: 97). In some cases in Germany, it is possible to file for a *Duldung*, an 'exceptional leave to remain' with the support of a lawyer. 'Tolerated' immigrants – i.e. denied asylum seekers who cannot be deported immediately – have the right to marry, although it is becoming more and more difficult for them to do so. Providing the necessary documents remains complicated for immigrants with an insecure status in Germany. Foreigners who enter on a tourist visa are allowed to stay for three months. If the wedding does not occur within the three months, the foreign partner has to leave the country. He or she might then apply for a new visa in order to get married in Germany. Students with a student visa do not face these obstacles.

All of the regulations and laws outlined above may be interpreted differently in actual practice. The authorities have the discretion to decide in each individual case whether or not they will allow a binational couple to marry. Binational marriages, particularly those between a German citizen and a third-country national, such as those from Africa, are often viewed with great suspicion by the majority of the public, as well as by the authorities. While authorities see the purpose of binational marriage as crucial, they are not at all interested in why German-German couples marry. German citizens may also wed for reasons of tax reduction, economic stability or advantages in career-building. Yet for binational couples, the German state effectively sees love as the only legitimate grounds for marriage. Hence, couples have to give proof of their emotional closeness. According to the statement of a member of the Association for Binational Marriage and Family in Germany,<sup>8</sup> a pregnancy may indicate 'real love' and could facilitate the marriage process.

Authorities have administrative discretion to decide whether to allow a couple to marry. To help them determine whether the relationship is genuine, authorities are permitted to interview the partners separately, and to talk to neighbours, friends and co-workers (§ 5 section 2 (1) Law of Civil Status). Some of the criteria on which the authorities base their suspicion include:

- whether the wedding was scheduled to take place after an intended deportation was announced
- whether the partners speak a common language
- whether the German partner was formerly married to a foreigner
- whether the couple shares a common apartment and

- whether one partner is much older than the other (especially when the woman is older than the man).<sup>9</sup>

The civil registry office has the right to refuse to conduct the marriage ceremony if they suspect a ‘fictitious marriage’.<sup>10</sup> In this sense, the authorities or, more precisely, individual officials, regulate immigration to, and integration in, Germany. Anderson (2003: 93) talks about ‘the legitimate immigration regulation within the scope of marriage’. The focus of the immigration office is on a familiar and marital relationship, which implies that controls are also possible after the wedding. In Germany, as in other European countries, marriage for the purpose of obtaining a residence permit is viewed as deception and can be prosecuted (Beck-Gernsheim 2006: 120). According to § 92a of the Foreigner Law, the foreigner can lose the residence permit and the involved German can be penalised if it is proven that the purpose of the marriage was to obtain a residence permit. In addition, the penalty for the German person is even higher when he or she accepts money in exchange for marrying the foreigner. In short, despite the fact that marriage and family are legally protected by the German Basic Law, different regulations apply for binational couples.

#### 10.4 Data and methods

The analysis of transnational movements between Cameroon and Germany and marriage strategies of Cameroonian men in Germany benefited greatly by the opportunity to conduct multi-sited ethnography. I conducted field research in Cameroon (for four months) and in Germany, mainly in Berlin (for four months). This chapter concentrates on data collected in Germany, although my interviews in Cameroon are taken into account in the discussion of the migrants’ life journeys. I used the snowball sampling technique to contact my informants. With many of my interviewees I still keep in touch via email or telephone. The research process has no clear beginning or end; it is, rather, a continuous process.

In the presentation of my results, I have changed the names of my interviewees and some background information in order to ensure their anonymity. These changes have no influence on the content or context of the descriptions. I conducted informal conversations, participant observations, semi-structured interviews and expert interviews in order to understand the experiences, attitudes and strategies of Cameroonian migrants in Germany. This exploratory research approach enabled me to review my research questions throughout the entire study. I was able to change research questions and go back into the field to explore different directions and areas.

The exploration of migrants’ strategies is associated with methodolog-

ical difficulties. Above all, the examination of practices by migrants with a 'weak' legal status, such as undocumented migrants or those living and working in Germany with false documents, proved to be difficult and extremely time-consuming. It is clear that undocumented immigrants are not particularly willing to talk to a German researcher about their experiences and their tactics. In the majority of my interviews, I first had to prove that I was not working with the immigration office and, second, that I did not want to report them to the police. Many of my informants feared deportation. For this reason, I used the first meetings to introduce myself. I explained my research project and answered questions such as, 'Why are you doing this?' or 'What are my advantages for participating in the study?' Field research of this kind demands patience, personal engagement and empathy. Frequent meetings and long talks are essential to build trust.<sup>11</sup> Mahler (1998: 26) well describes the challenges of doing field research with illegal migrants: '...to study them requires finding them; to find them requires patient, exhaustive networking; to understand them requires entering their communities and earning their trust'.

## 10.5      **Cameroonian immigrants in Germany**

Cameroonian immigrants constitute the third-largest group of sub-Saharan Africans in Germany. With an official estimate of 14,272 men and women in June 2005 (German Federal Statistical Office 2005), Cameroonian immigrants are thus just behind Ghanaians (20,609) and Nigerians (15,544). Interestingly, this figure has increased, albeit slightly in the last five years, whereas the number of other sub-Saharan immigrants has declined. One explanation might be that Cameroon experienced a delayed economic crisis in the mid-1980s, compared to other West and Central African countries where the economic decline already began in the 1960s.

The gender distribution among Cameroonians in Germany is about one third women (5,400) and two thirds men (8,900) (German Federal Statistical Office 2005). Cameroonian immigrants in Germany, as well as in other European migration destinations – like France, Belgium and the UK – are predominantly young (between 25 and 35 years old, according to official statistics) and relatively well educated. In the winter 2005-2006 term, about 5,300 Cameroonians were registered at a German university, and around 1,000 new students from Cameroon enroll each year (DAAD 2006). Parallel to the increase in the number of Cameroonian students attending German universities, the number of asylum applications from Cameroonians has been rising in recent years, despite the fact that the recognition rate is almost zero. Each year, around 600 Cameroonians ask for asylum in Germany, but fewer than 1 per cent are granted asylum (German Federal Statistical Office 2005).

Irrespective of whether Cameroonians are living in Germany as students, asylum seekers, 'tolerated' or undocumented migrants, almost all interviewed persons had previous contacts in Germany before their arrival. The presence of a transcontinental network is one of the most important factors influencing the choice of the country of destination. Social networks are essential sources of information about housing, employment and immigration and integration laws. My field-work data from Cameroon show that migration decisions are rarely individual, but are rather family and community decisions (Fleischer 2007). Families and households select certain family members for the transnational migration process. They invest in them and finance their journey with the expectation of receiving support and remittances.<sup>12</sup> Cameroonians coming to Germany are generally from middle-class families who can afford to pay for the expensive migration process in advance. The majority of the respondents plan a temporary stay in Germany. Some would like to finish their education and subsequently work for some years in Germany, while others simply aim to earn money to support their family before returning to Cameroon. However, in practice, the return is often delayed because the process of legalisation, which is often a precondition for earning money, takes longer than expected, or because the desired amount of money could not be earned in the expected time frame.

## 10.6 Insecure status

The pathways students and asylum seekers follow to Germany, and their subsequent experiences in the country of destination, are quite different. However, both groups face similar difficulties in securing the long-term legal status that would allow them to achieve their migration goals, e.g. to earn enough money to support the family or to set up their own business in Cameroon. Certainly, for asylum seekers the situation is much more complicated and the risk of being deported is much higher than for students, but all of them fear being sent back without accomplishing their personal aims or those of the family.

According to my informants, applying for a student visa in Cameroon can be compared to a hurdle race. Several preconditions need to be fulfilled: German language skills are required and financial guarantees are requested. Some applicants manage to get enrolled in a German university and subsequently obtain a student visa. After arriving in Germany, many students need to self-finance their studies, while, at the same time, they are expected to send money home. Long working hours or personal difficulties in Germany can prolong the time it takes to complete their studies, which might lead to refusal by the authorities to extend the student visa that has to be renewed every two years. Once they have completed

their studies, the German government allows them to stay one more year in Germany in order to find employment in the field of study. Few manage to obtain a work contract enabling them to stay. Some students fail to complete their studies and hence forfeit their right to remain in Germany. A former student from the western province in Cameroon reflects on this.

I tried hard to complete my Master's, but it did not work out. I had to work a lot in addition to my studies and I rarely had time to learn. The language barrier made it even more complicated and I failed the exams three times before they made me leave the university. I had no other choice than to obtain a residence permit in a different way. A friend recommended that I marry a German woman.

As the statement above elucidates, marrying a German is often not a first preference, but rather the last resort for many, when there are no other options.

For asylum seekers, entering and obtaining legal status turns out to be even more complicated than for students. To apply for asylum in Germany, the asylum seeker must enter Germany directly from Cameroon and not from a so-called 'safe third country'.<sup>13</sup> Since Germany is surrounded by safe third countries, the foreigner has no other choice than to arrive by plane and apply for asylum directly at the airport. Some of the respondents reported that they entered the country with fake documents or with the passport of a different person whom they had paid.

The asylum procedure follows a strict order: application for asylum, several interviews, distribution to reception centres and subsequently to asylum homes, more application hearings and so on. The asylum process can take up to five years or longer. And the so-called 'residence obligation' (*Residenzpflicht*) restricts the movement of asylum seekers to their administrative district. Here they are lodged in 'asylum homes' (*Asylbewerberheime*) often situated far outside cities and towns. Conditions in these homes are described by my interviewees as dire. Reaching them by public transport is both time-consuming and complicated, and often there are only a few buses a day. As one Cameroonian woman reflected: 'The government gave us houses in the forest to show its citizens that we are not like them.' Rooms are shockingly small. Bathrooms and kitchens need to be shared, no easy feat, when people from more than twenty different nations are living together. Private life is hardly possible. Additionally, asylum seekers are often given coupons for foods, clothes and cosmetics, which they can only exchange in certain supermarkets. Asylum seekers from different African countries call themselves '*aduro*', which refers to the hard living conditions in asylum homes. One informant told me '*aduro*' means, literally translated, 'to suffer'. Cameroonian asylum seekers have

almost no chance of obtaining secure legal status in Germany.<sup>14</sup> For this reason, they need to search for alternatives during the asylum process. Some Cameroonians receive a temporary, renewable 'exceptional leave to remain', called *Duldung* ('toleration') in German.<sup>15</sup> Persons with a *Duldung* status cannot be deported immediately – the *Duldung* suspends removal for a certain period – but still must fear deportation in the near future. Their status is extremely insecure, and working legally is highly restricted.

## 10.7 Cameroonian-German marriages

The following section describes the strategies and practices Cameroonian men employ to become legitimate. I use available data from the German Federal Statistical Office and examples from my field-work illustrated as quotes.

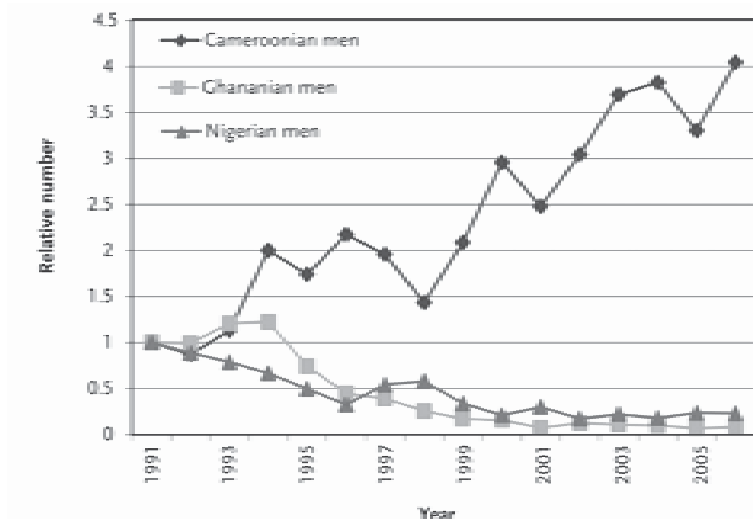
The number of binational marriages in Germany has been continuously increasing. In 1960, every 25th marriage was between a German citizen and a foreigner, while in 2004, every sixth marriage was binational.<sup>16</sup> Since 1995, more German men have been marrying foreign women – mainly from Poland, Thailand, Russia and Romania – while fewer German women have been marrying foreign men. Before 1995, the trend was the reverse. When marrying binationally, German women prefer men from Turkey, Italy and the US.

Data on binational marriages from the German Federal Statistical Office allow only limited analysis and interpretation. The main problem is that marriages outside Germany are not registered in German statistics. According to the Association for Binational Marriage and Family, the number taking place outside Germany could be significantly higher since many German-foreign couples marry abroad for administrative reasons. My interviewees confirmed this. They declared that many Cameroonian-German couples marry abroad, either in Cameroon or in Denmark<sup>17</sup> to avoid administrative problems, such as having to provide a certificate of no impediment (*Ehefähigkeitszeugnis*),<sup>18</sup> which does not exist in Cameroon. If the couple marries abroad, it is necessary to apply subsequently for a family reunification visa.

Figure 10.1 presents relative numbers of Cameroonian men marrying German women between 1991 and 2004, as compared to Ghanaian and Nigerian men in binational marriages with German women. The number of marriages between a Cameroonian man and a German woman quadrupled from 1991 to 2004, whereas marriages between Ghanaian and Nigerian men and German women declined radically. For 2004, official figures show that only 36 immigrants from Ghana and 61 immigrants from Nigeria though 88 Cameroonian immigrants married German women. One explanation for the increase in Cameroonian-German

marriages versus the decline in Nigerian-German and Ghanaian-German marriages might be that Cameroonian migrants began arriving in larger numbers since the 1990s. Another reason could be because migrants from Ghana and Nigeria have been in Germany longer, so they have found other ways to obtain residency.

**Figure 10.1** *Number of Cameroonian, Ghanaian and Nigerian men who married a German woman in Germany, 1991-2004*



*Note:* Figures are standardised (reference year = 1991) and show developments over time. Only marriages registered in Germany are recorded.

*Source:* German Federal Statistical Office (2004)

Marriages between Cameroonian women and German men are also on the rise, but their absolute number is smaller than that of Cameroonian men and German women. Marriages between Cameroonian partners in Germany are extremely rare. For 2004, only six marriages between a Cameroonian man and a Cameroonian woman were registered.

#### 10.7.1 'Go and find yourself a German wife!'

The Cameroonian artist Koppo, who sings in Franc-Anglais,<sup>19</sup> foretells the future of many a young Cameroonian migrant in '*Je go*'.<sup>20</sup> In this song, he says that he would even marry a widow to achieve his migration goals.

I am going to the white man's place, to make money. When you watch TV you see that in the white man's place do they suffer?



Everybody is fine. As soon as I reach there, I find a job, any kind of job, which can give me money: take the dog to a walk. I will work. I will wash corpse. I will work. I will even get married to the widows.

Two of my respondents who were only being 'tolerated' in Germany at the time of the interview reported being advised by German authorities to find a German woman willing to marry them. The authorities, but also friends, acquaintances and compatriots, advised them to marry since this would be the surest way to secure long-term residency in Germany.

If you are afraid that they'll send you back, the only chance you have is to marry. (Cameroonian man, 34)

The German legal situation does not give you any other chance than to get married. I went to ask for temporary residence and they [the authorities] told me, go and find yourself a wife. (Cameroonian man, 27)

We from Africa have no chance of obtaining asylum in Germany and there is no other way than to marry. (Cameroonian man, 24)

These quotes describe the impasse experienced by many Cameroonian men. German law puts them in an impossible situation, whereby marrying a German woman is the last resort. But how do Cameroonian men and German women meet? One option is to visit African nightclubs. One respondent comments on the situation in Berlin's clubs.

In these places there are mainly Cameroonians with an insecure status who are looking for women. And then there are these German women who come mainly out of curiosity. Some of them come to have sex with a black man. (Cameroonian man, 34)

Charles Ofoji (2005: 63-65), a published author and a former asylum seeker who is originally from Nigeria, came to live undocumented in Germany. Describing the precarious situation in Berlin nightclubs, he writes: 'Hustling for women here is a serious business, and for most of the blacks it is a do-or-die affair.' Ofoji explains that African men need German women for different reasons, though mainly to get a residence permit.

But there are various other ways of meeting German women. These include marriage and lonely hearts ads in newspapers and online; chat rooms for Germans interested in getting to know Africans, and vice versa; introductions through friends; involvement in NGOs and associations; and African-culture events, such as concerts and readings. Some

Cameroonian men are pretty desperate, even willing to pay to marry a German woman. During my field-work I had several relevant experiences myself. Once I was asked to marry the brother of one of my informants. He offered me €15,000 for the marriage. In another case, I was supposed to find a German woman who would be willing to fly to Cameroon to get married. Her Cameroonian husband would then apply for family reunification in Germany, and they were to remain married for three to five years. It was clear that the arrangement was set up to be temporary from the outset. Travel expenses, like the flight ticket and visa, would be covered. The wedding ceremony would be arranged in Cameroon, and the German woman would receive around €20,000 in installments.

### 10.7.2 *Various incentives for German women to marry binationally*

During my field research in Berlin, I also had the chance to interview six German women who were married to Cameroonian men.<sup>21</sup> The conversations with German women illustrate their motives, the complexity of binational marriages and the difficulties that come with the phenomenon.<sup>22</sup> It is hard to draw general conclusions about their reasons for marrying African partners. As with every marriage, there were diverse motives, incentives and impulses that lead to the decision to marry somebody. My guess is that only for very few couples, binational or otherwise, was love the only motivation. It can be assumed that a marriage often fulfills several functions. Some women told me that they had begun thinking about marriage shortly after meeting their Cameroonian partner. In a couple of cases, the partner had only an 'exceptional leave to remain' in Germany. The insecure status of their partners caused fear and anxiety in the women, as well as in the men. The women were afraid to lose them. To avoid deportation of their partners, they agreed to marry much faster than they would have 'normally' done. Many women claimed they would have married the man anyway, but not so quickly. A 35-year-old woman reflects on her relationship as follows:

I met my husband in a salsa disco where I usually went every Wednesday to dance. After a couple of dates, he quickly moved into my apartment since he had just a small room for himself in a friend's flat. He came as an asylum seeker to Germany and when we met, he was only 'tolerated' here. I feared he would not return home one day because they would deport him to Cameroon. Sometimes I could not sleep because I was worried about him. I was simply afraid to lose him. My fears were the main reason for the fast marriage. In other circumstances we would have waited much longer. We were married for four years and we now live separated, but we are still good friends.

Other couples married due to the lack of a work permit. Through marrying, the Cameroonian spouse could receive residency and a work permit. He then could acquire access to the labour market and support his wife financially.

Sympathy and charity were other reasons for binational marriages. In one case, a German woman reported that she married because she wanted to do a favour for a friend. Otherwise, her husband would have had to leave Germany and return to Cameroon. She told me that she did not receive any money for the marriage. A 37-year-old woman explained to me how 'I felt sorry for him and I wanted to help him to stay in Germany and earn some money.'

Among my interviewees, many were already divorced or lived separated from their German partners. Three of the women interviewed were already divorced from their Cameroonian husbands. Two of them told me that they felt betrayed by their former Cameroonian partners. After the separation, they realised that their husbands had married them for a residence permit. A 29-year-old woman stated: 'I think he never really loved me. Meanwhile, I am sure he just married me for the papers.' Both women told me that they had had romantic ideas of love. The relationship with an African man promised to be special because 'he was so different...the way he looks, the way he talks, his culture, everything.' A different appearance and manner often gave the first impulse and provided the main attraction. Some women admitted that cultural differences, mentality and vitality fascinated them at the beginning of their relationship, but became problematic at the end. A couple of my interviewees told me about their fascination with the solidarity and strong bonds between family members in African families, and they hoped that Cameroonian men would fulfill this ideal. In addition, they hoped to become part of such a family. The majority of the German women were older than their Cameroonian spouses, and some had prior relationships with African partners. A 39-year-old woman confessed: 'I was so happy to have a young, good-looking man at my side. My female friends admired me and I was really afraid to lose him and be all by myself again.' Christine Thomas-Khaled, legal counselor from the Afrika Center in Berlin and a specialist in German foreign law, informs and advises African-German couples and families. She summarises the motives of German women for marrying an African partner as follows: curiosity, the desire to escape the German culture and 'to break rules', a longing for the exotic, but also disappointment and frustration with German partners.

### 10.7.3 *Perspectives of Cameroonian men*

My interviews with Cameroonian men revealed another side of the story. They often described their situation as desperate and hopeless. In addition

to their complicated circumstances in Germany, their families pressured them to send money and support other relatives. They reported that they felt totally exhausted and at the end of their tether. In a candid interview, one 28-year-old respondent stated:

Africans use German women only for the purpose of receiving their permit. And when they have obtained their legal status they leave the women and look for somebody from their own background. I know this is very hard, but it is no secret that marriage is in many cases the only chance to stay in Germany.

Marriage to a German woman can also lead to dependency for as long as the residence permit is contingent on the existence and maintenance of the marriage. Some Cameroonians were placed under extreme pressure from their German wives, who threatened to file for divorce unless the men did as the women wanted. One 27-year-old informant explained:

In many marriages between African men and German women, there is a strong inequality. The German women clearly have the power. They can decide when to get married, but also when to divorce their husband. The African man is depending totally on his German wife in many ways, since the marriage has to last at least three years in order to get the permit. The situation makes some men mad.

Another man, 34 years old, was emotional as he described his situation.

Me and my German wife had to go to the *Ausländerbehörde* [immigration office] to prolong my temporary residence permit. As soon as we got there my wife told the authorities that she wants to get divorced. You cannot imagine how I felt in this situation. I was totally afraid and I did not know what to think. There was nothing wrong in our relationship. We were married almost two years and I could not think of what to do without the permit... I was so afraid to lose my residence permit and that they would send me back to Cameroon. After some arguing and discussion in German, which I only understood in parts, my wife explained to me that she just wanted to test me, whether I would be afraid of losing her. She told me to behave better in the future and not to come home late anymore, otherwise she will get divorced.

This quote points to the fact that marriages between German women and Cameroonian men are highly shaped by legal framework. Inequalities between partners often causing conflicts and misconceptions are the result.

Almost all respondents stated that being married to a German woman means something completely different to them than being in a relationship with a Cameroonian woman. The majority of them expected to return to Cameroon in a few years. Their aim was to marry a Cameroonian woman in Cameroon, and their families also awaited their return and their marriage at home. One 29-year-old Cameroonian man explained the situation as follows:

Getting married here in Germany is somehow a problem for us, since marriage in Cameroon has a totally different meaning than here. I know many who got married to a German woman, but when they received their permit, they got divorced and now they are living together with a woman from Cameroon, because they always wanted this.

Some men appreciate it when their German wives become pregnant and give birth. A child gives them additional legal security. Even if the marriage does not last, the father of the common child can remain in Germany in order to carry out his paternal responsibilities since the child has German nationality. A 32-year-old respondent remarked:

I was happy when my wife told me that she was pregnant. First, I like children and, second, now I am less dependent on my wife. If she wants the divorce, fine. I can still stay in Germany and prolong my residency because of the child.

Certainly some marriages, as reported by both Cameroonian men and German women, were happy despite the couple having to marry faster than other couples might, and their administrative trouble being much more intense. Englert (1995) claims in her book that love develops in the course of time. She argues that binational couples need time to 'get used to each other'. Still, in some cases friends and family members are suspicious of the relationship. On the basis of case studies, Englert (1995), however, describes possibilities for a harmonious binational relationship where love was not the initial motivation, but developed in the course of time. This also holds true for some German-Cameroonian couples who reported being happily married.

#### 10.7.4 *Incentives for transnational polygyny*

Diminishing options for African migrants to legalise their status – with marriage to a German woman being one of the last resorts for legal inclusion – may lead to ‘transnational polygyny’, i.e. being married in Cameroon as well as in Germany. During my field-work in Cameroon, I met two men in their mid-thirties who were already married yet planned to go to Germany knowing they might need to marry a German woman there to acquire residency. I also talked to their Cameroonian wives, who simply stated there was no other option, and that if their husband had to take another wife, they would have to accept it. They were more worried about their husbands sending money and supporting the family than about their remarrying. One of my respondents in Berlin, also married to a German woman, admitted after several meetings that he had another wife and two children in Cameroon.<sup>23</sup> He had not seen them for over five years, but confessed to sending them money regularly. His German wife knew nothing about the double marriage, and he intended to return to Cameroon in a few years. In two of my interviews with German women since divorced from their Cameroonian partners, the women explained how they discovered during their marriages how their husband had another wife and children in Cameroon. Both women remained married despite the other wives, but refused to give money to their husbands since they suspected it would be sent to their families abroad.

Transnational polygynous marriage strategies<sup>24</sup> can be seen as a consequence of restrictive immigration policies in Germany. Although some Cameroonian men are already married in Cameroon, they are forced to take a second wife in Germany to be able to remain and work in the country of destination.<sup>25</sup> In addition to the legal aspect, the German wife generally also offers housing, financial support and necessary integration opportunities into German society, e.g. access to networks and information. One Cameroonian man explained how: ‘Marriage helps you to survive in Germany, not only for the papers, but also for a place to live and some money to send home.’ However, the vast majority of Cameroonian men told me that they intended to return home. They saw their German marriage as temporary, and talked about being rejoined with their families. This example of transnational polygyny clearly demonstrates how Cameroonian men are under pressure both from their new spouse in Germany and from their place of origin.

### 10.8 Conclusion

My study demonstrates the continuing importance of national policies and legislation for marginalised migrants like Cameroonians. Germany has

steadily tightened its criteria for entry and residency down to the moral and ethical cores of German society: asylum, marriage and family. Unwanted migrants are thus forced to develop strategies and practices to become legally included. For Cameroonian men, marrying a German woman often remains the only option for obtaining permanent legal residency and the accompanying right to work. While the importance of marriage has decreased for many German citizens and non-marital unions have become more common, marriage to a German spouse remains crucial for some migrants. The German state, represented by its authorities, determines categories of acceptable marriage partners and denies marital unions that do not conform to the German marriage ideal. African-German couples need to prove that their relationship is based on love and emotional affection, criteria the German state expects to see in a binational marriage relationship. The life trajectories of Cameroonian migrants are thus shaped by the boundaries of German immigration, marriage laws and regulations.

## Notes

- 1 One of my respondents cited this proverb to illustrate strategies African migrants use to, as he said, 'deal with the draconian laws adopted by the German government'. I found a German translation in a book by the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe (1983: 29): '*Seit die Menschen gelernt haben zu schießen, ohne zu fehlen, habe ich gelernt zu fliegen ohne innezuhalten*'.
- 2 One exception is Glick Schiller et al. (2005), which is based on the ethnography of Ghanaians in Berlin (conducted by Nieswand), Nigerians and Congolese in Halle (Saale) (conducted by Glick Schiller) and Somalis in Germany (conducted by Schlee), among others. (This is a collectively authored article, so it seems, where different co-authors have been responsible for fieldwork with different groups)
- 3 Bledsoe (2006) analyses the demography of family reunification using the example of Gambians in Spain.
- 4 Borders within the EU became less relevant when European member states started to sign the Schengen Agreement in 1985.
- 5 When referring to non-EU citizens, it is necessary to distinguish between those from countries that belong to the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and those who do not. Non-OECD nationals face stricter controls and regulations than its members (Miles & Thränhardt 1996: 3). When I talk about non-EU citizens, I refer to 'non-OECD nationals'. I use the terms 'non-EU nationals' and 'third-country nationals' interchangeably.
- 6 Here I will mention just the most important changes: 1993's reform of the Asylum Law (known as the Asylum Compromise); 1997's amendment of the foreigners and asylum provisions; the 2000 Citizenship Law that introduced a (conditional) mode of citizenship acquisition by birth in addition to naturalisation and descent; the 2005 and 2007 Immigration Acts; and the 2006 decision to grant 'tolerated' persons a humanitarian right to stay, the *Bleiberechtsbeschluss*.
- 7 During the first two years of marriage, the foreigner depends strongly on the good will of his or her spouse since the right to residency is contingent on maintenance

of the marriage. In some cases, this regulation is misused by the German spouse, who can file for divorce at any time, thus exploiting the foreign spouse's insecure situation. The right to residency's dependency on marriage thus seems problematic.

- 8 See <http://www.verband-bi-nationaler.de>.
- 9 Human rights organisations criticise the generally suspicious attitude towards binational couples. They describe the examination of binational marital relations as unfair, inhumane and as an invasion of people's privacy and intimate lives.
- 10 The so-called 'fictitious marriage', also referred to as 'marriage of convenience' (*Scheinehe* or *Aufenthaltshe* in German), is defined by the EU as solely aiming to circumvent rules on the entry and residency of third-country nationals and on obtaining a residence permit.
- 11 Many of my informants rarely talked about their own situation, but rather about a third person. They were explaining experiences of friends and acquaintances to me and it was not always clear whether it was in fact their own story, not that of another.
- 12 In many cases, remittances pay for the education of younger siblings, the health care of family members, the construction of houses, the establishment of a business or for technical equipment, such as mobile phones and computers. My respondents reported sending their families monthly remittances of between €50 and €400.
- 13 This has held true since the so-called Asylum Compromise of 1993.
- 14 In 2004, 717 Cameroonians applied for asylum in Germany. Only two of them obtained asylum and thus temporary residency, while nineteen obtained a tolerated status and 585 Cameroonians were denied the right to asylum without any explanation. One hundred eleven asylum procedures were discontinued on the grounds that the applicant withdrew his or her application, another EU country was found responsible for the person according to Dublin rules or the asylum seeker had previously applied for asylum (German Federal Statistical Office 2004).
- 15 'In 2003, 1,569 Cameroonians in Germany were living under *Duldung* status (Federal Statistical Office 2004).'
- 16 See <http://www.verband-bi-nationaler.de/zahlenundfakten>.
- 17 Denmark's more liberal laws enable an easy, less complicated marriage that requires fewer documents and can thus be handled much more quickly than in Germany.
- 18 The *Ehefähigkeitszeugnis* verifies that there are no barriers to a marriage according to the law of the home country (§ 1309 section 1 German Civil Code).
- 19 Franc-Anglais is a mixture of Cameroon's two official languages, French and English. It is also a lingua franca known as Cameroon Pidgin English.
- 20 From the album *Je go* (BB ProdM 2004).
- 21 In addition, I analysed reports, comments and requests made on the internet forum Fast Africa (<http://www.fastafrica.de>) by German women in relationships with African men. These contributions helped me understand the women's perspectives.
- 22 Several studies focus on marriage between African and German partners. Using case studies, Englert (1995) describes the worries and fears of both partners. In her Master's thesis, Rose (2001) examines stereotypes of binational relationships using the example of Ghanaian-German couples.
- 23 These practices may also be occurring as of late among married Cameroonian women who migrate to Germany. Their migration is enabled by meeting German



- men on the internet and being invited by them to Germany. After travelling on a tourist visa, the Cameroonian woman marries the man in Germany, where she aims to remain for some years, thus supporting her children from abroad. In this sense, Cameroonian women are taking over the household position of men.
- 24 Lubkemann (2002) defines transnational polygyny as a man's marriage to multiple wives residing in different countries.
  - 25 In contrast to the Thai women studied by Suksumboon (this volume), for many Cameroonian men, marrying a German woman is rarely a first choice, but rather the last resort – when there are no other options. However, similar to female marriage migrants from Thailand, sexualised fantasies and gendered images of 'the West' also play a major role in Cameroonian migrants' choices.

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# 11 'He's the Swiss citizen, I'm the foreign spouse': Binational marriages and the impact of family-related migration policies on gender relations

*Yvonne Riaño*

## 11.1 Introduction

In Switzerland, like other European countries, family-related migration remains the main means of immigration. Nearly 40 per cent of the immigrants who entered Switzerland between 1998 and 2007 did so for reasons of marriage or family reunification, while only a quarter entered because of employment (SFS 2008). One of the reasons the ratio of family-related immigration to labour immigration is so high is that the Swiss government has traditionally limited the number of employment immigrants, whereas family immigration has not been so tightly controlled.

As in other European countries (Grillo 2008; Kofman, Kraler, Kohli & Schmoll and Grillo this volume), public debates within Switzerland over migrant families and marriage migration have intensified in recent years and become a major issue in policymaking. In these debates, the 'migrant family' is often represented as an obstacle to integration, characterised by patriarchal relationships and illiberal practices. The idea that the values and practices of migrant families are embedded in gender inequalities and thus are at odds with values embodied by the supposed 'Swiss family' is prevalent in these debates.

In this ongoing controversy, 'migrant families' are often imagined to solely comprise individuals of the same ethnic origin and citizenship. In the Swiss case, this assumption no longer holds. Nearly a third of the immigrants who enter the country for reasons of marriage or family reunification do so to join a Swiss citizen (SFS 2008). Indeed, since the 1990s, binational marriages, involving women and men of diverse national and ethnic backgrounds, have become a main form of family-related migration: in 2007, 37 per cent of all marriages in Switzerland were between a Swiss citizen and a foreigner. Over two thirds of these marriages were between a Swiss man and a foreign woman (SFS 2008). The majority of these female foreign spouses are Europeans (60 per cent), followed by Asians (15.4 per cent) and Latin Americans (15 per cent) (SFS 2008). Marrying a Swiss man has become a principal mechanism for the migration of women to Switzerland, particularly for those from countries not formally part of the European Union ('third-country states'). An expression

of this trend is the dramatic increase in the numbers of migrant women in recent years: whereas in 1980 only 48 per cent of all Latin American immigrants were women, by the year 2008 the portion had increased to 64 per cent. In the case of Asian immigrants, the percentage of women increased from 46 per cent in 1980 to 50 per cent in 2008 (SFS 2008). Transnational marriages to a European have also become an increasingly prevalent form of family-related migration in many other European countries, as researchers in the Netherlands, Germany, Austria and Spain have reported (Digruher & Messinger 2006; Roca 2007; Suksomboon, Fleischer and González-Ferrer this volume). Thus, contrary to what is widely assumed, so-called 'migrant families' do not necessarily consist of individuals having the same national and ethnic origin. Rather, they increasingly consist of transnational family units, often comprising a national of a European country and foreign family members (i.e. a spouse and children).

The phenomenon of family-related migration, including binational marriages, has received relatively little attention in the literature despite being the predominant mode of legal entry into most European receiving countries for the last three decades (OECD 2003; Timmerman 2008; Kofman et al. this volume). In Switzerland, studies of marriages between a Swiss national and a foreigner have mostly focused on family relations and intercultural communication (Albert, Ossipow, Outemzabet & Waldis 2000). At the international level, researchers initially interpreted them as the strategy of women from low-income countries to move to higher-income countries in order to improve their material conditions in life and that of their families (Oshima & Francis 1989; Cahill 1990; Truong & Del Rosario 1994; Gorny & Kepinska 2004). Recent studies have presented a more nuanced view showing that, contrary to popular belief, foreign spouses in binational marriages are not necessarily poor, they do not categorically marry men who are above them on the socio-economic ladder, and they do not experience migration solely as a form of empowerment (Waldis 2001; Piper & Rocas 2003; Constable 2004; Riaño 2011). Foreign spouses have also been portrayed as victims of global marriage and sex markets (Kofman et al. this volume). This representation is increasingly contested by researchers who highlight women's active role in deciding when, where and how to migrate and what strategies to use to improve their labour market participation (Riaño 2011; Erel 2009). Furthermore, the common view that foreign women living in countries outside Europe marry a European partner merely for economic reasons is far too simplistic (see also Constable 2004; Kofman et al. and Suksomboon this volume). Such binational marriages are rather an expression of the global phenomenon of shifting gender relations (Riaño 2003). Many foreign women have become critical of gender inequalities in their countries of origin, and some imagine marriage to a European as a more

equal relationship than one with a man in their own country. At the same time, some European men have difficulty adjusting to shifting gender roles in their home countries and they seek a more 'traditional' arrangement through marrying a foreigner (Riaño & Baghdadi 2007a).

From the above discussion, we gather that public debates on family migration have mainly focused on the migrant families themselves, portraying them as unwilling to integrate and characterised by unequal gender relations. The aim of this chapter is to shift that perspective of analysis by investigating how the state facilitates integration of foreign spouses and promotes more equal gender relations within transnational couples. So far, we still have limited understanding of how family-related migration policies affect the social integration of foreign spouses (Collet 2000; Kofman 2004; Spescha 2007) or gender relations between members of the transnational couple (Riaño & Wastl-Walter 2006; Van Walsum & Spijkerboer 2007).

Understanding this issue is important for two reasons. First, migration policies are not inconsequential, but are opportunity structures that limit or empower immigrants towards full social participation. As Cyrus, Gropas, Kosic and Vogel (2005) have noted, immigrants face very different opportunity structures depending not only on the country in which they live, but also on the rights linked to their specific country of origin, to their individual status and to the implementation of rights on the local level. Second, migration policies, as any form of state policies, directly or indirectly affect gender relations by virtue of how they impact the nature and distribution of resources, social roles and power relations between women and men (Daly & Rake 2003). Besides, understanding how state policies impact power relations between men and women is of much current importance, as gender equality has become a priority for most European countries. In Switzerland, gender equality has been embodied as a principle since 1981 in the Swiss Constitution. The Gender Equality Act (GEA) that came into effect in 1996 stated one of its main aims as being 'to promote gender equality in all areas of society, particularly in the work place, and to eliminate any form of direct or indirect gender-based discrimination'. These legal efforts have been complemented by the creation of the Federal Office for Gender Equality, which directs a great part of its endeavours to gender equality within the family by promoting the compatibility of family responsibilities and professional activity.

The aim of this chapter is to contribute to furthering our understanding of family-related migration and social integration in contemporary European societies by examining: a) how Swiss migration and integration policies shape the social integration of foreign spouses from countries outside the EU and b) the compatibility of such policies with Switzerland's aim towards the equality of women and men in all areas of society. The following questions are specifically addressed: what views regarding

family norms and gender roles are inherent in family-related migration policies? What rights are granted to foreign spouses, and for what specific purposes? Do these rights provide an adequate basis for equal gender relations among members of cross-border families?

The chapter is divided into four parts. The first part introduces the concepts of economic citizenship, state discourse and gender culture, which are used to assess the impact of family-related migration policies on the social integration of foreign spouses. The second part presents and evaluates the framework that Swiss migration and integration policies provide towards the equal participation of foreign spouses in society. The third part interprets the results in the context of persisting patriarchal values and gender inequality. Finally, the conclusions put the results in a wider context and formulate questions for the future.

## 11.2 Economic citizenship, state discourse and gender culture

The questions posed in this chapter are addressed from the threefold conceptual perspective of economic citizenship, state discourse and gender culture.

### *Economic citizenship*

This section examines the implications of family-related migration policies for the social integration of foreign spouses, which raises the question of how integration is to be understood. In this section, integration is addressed from the perspective of citizenship, a perspective founded on the principles of human rights, and defined by Marshall (1950) as 'full membership in the community'. From this perspective, integration is understood as the ability for immigrants to participate on an equal basis in the various spheres of society. The contested nature of citizenship is also emphasised by this approach. Although most contemporary European democracies claim that citizenship is an inclusive position to which everybody should, in principle, have access, studies have shown how, in practice, there exist formal and informal processes of inclusion and exclusion that lead to the unequal positioning of community members vis-à-vis the state and society; these unequal positionings often fall along the lines of gender, class, ethnicity or legal status (e.g. Yuval-Davis 1997).

According to Marshall (1950), citizenship encompasses civil, political and social rights. Although Marshall's notion of social rights includes the right to social protection against poverty, he does not fully elaborate on economic rights. In my view, the notion of citizenship needs to include the right to equal access to spaces of economic participation, a right that I propose to understand as 'economic citizenship'. In the case of migrants, labour market participation is a particularly important aspect of citizen-

ship because their residence status and naturalisation is often contingent on their employment. Further, several authors have recognised that participation in the labour market is the key to social integration (Dahinden, Fibbi, Moret & Cataccini 2004). As perceptions of immigrants from non-European countries are often based on negative stereotypes, securing entry to the labour market is a pivotal opportunity for them to disprove stereotypes and obtain recognition from members of the host society (Riaño & Baghdadi 2007). Feminist authors argue that women's equal access to paid employment is the key to their citizenship (Pateman 1989; Kessler-Harris 2003). In order for women to acquire or maintain their autonomy, they must be able to have equal access to sources of income and/or material support outside of their family relations – that is, to paid employment and/or social benefits (Gill & Sharma 2007). Thus, the perspective of economic citizenship that I propose here combines the principles of human rights and gender equality, and will be used to assess the extent to which family-related migration policies facilitate equal participation of foreign spouses in all spheres of society and particularly in the workforce.

#### *State discourse*

Access to the labour market for immigrants is controlled by immigration legislation. Studying immigration legislation is thus essential for understanding economic citizenship. Studying immigration legislation requires understanding state discourse. The notion of discourse refers to the system of knowledge composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of action, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak and shape the social practices and agency of groups and individuals (Foucault 1980). Discourse is powerful because it is productive. Discourses 'naturalise' and often implicitly universalise a particular view of the world and position subjects within it (Gregory 2002). State discourses – the ways of portraying citizens and those unsuitable for citizenship, via official documents, white papers, legislation, political rhetoric and other documents, texts and forms of representation (McDowell 2003) – are particularly powerful discourses. Their dominance occurs 'because their legislative or policy-making positions place them in the crucible of discursive power and influence, namely there where discourse is not merely empty words, but has the direct force of law and regulation' (Van Dijk 2004: 15). Studying state discourse is, for Van Dijk, an important means of understanding how discrimination, racism and inequality are reproduced.

The Swiss case illustrates how immigrant policies construct discourses that serve to discriminate against an ethnically different 'Other'. Since the 1930s, Swiss immigration policies have been designed around the concept of *Überfremdung*, the idea that foreign 'overpopulation' threatens

Swiss identity, and that immigration policies must strictly control the numbers of foreigners allowed into the country as well as the extent of their socio-economic and political participation in society. Swiss legislation on citizenship (*Bürgerrechtsgesetz* BüG 1952), which is based on the principle of blood-based descent (*jus sanguinis*) rather than on place of birth (*jus solis*), is also restrictive. A foreigner willing to obtain Swiss citizenship must have lived a minimum of twelve uninterrupted years in Switzerland and prove to be 'integrated into Swiss society', 'familiar with the Swiss lifestyle, morals and customs', 'obedient to the Swiss legal system' and 'not represent a danger to Switzerland's internal and external security' (BüG art. 15). This request for citizenship must be approved at three levels: municipal, cantonal and federal, a stipulation that is unique worldwide. At 22 per cent, Switzerland has one of the highest proportions of foreigners in the world. To a large extent, this apparently high rate simply reflects its restrictive naturalisation policies. In fact, 54 per cent of the 1.7 million 'foreigners' living in Switzerland were either born and raised in the country, or have lived there for more than fifteen years (SFS 2008).

The admission and settlement of foreigners to Switzerland was regulated until 2007 by the Federal Law on the Residence and Settlement of Foreigners 1931 (*Bundesgesetz über Aufenthalt und Niederlassung der Ausländer*, ANAG). Its aims were to avoid the entry and settlement of 'undesirable' people into the country, to stabilise the job market, to protect Swiss nationals from unemployment and to control the foreigner-to-Swiss ratio within the population (Federal Assembly of the Swiss Confederation 1932). Since the 1990s, foreigner policies have considered the national origin of immigrants and used the notion of 'cultural distance' to classify immigrants according to those who are 'more likely' or 'less likely' to integrate into Swiss society. Foreigners were divided into three groups: first, an inner circle comprising EU nationals given immigration priority because of their cultural proximity to the Swiss; a middle circle for nationals from the United States and Canada, who were deemed 'halfway' there in terms of cultural distance; and a third circle for 'all other states', which were defined as being 'culturally distant' from the Swiss, and thus to be allowed into the country only in exceptional cases (Federal Council 1991). In 1998, the Swiss government replaced the three-circle model with a two-circle model, which improved the civic rights of EU immigrants, while restricting the entry of non-EU immigrants to highly skilled personnel.

The conceptualisation of foreigners from the EU as more valuable than non-EU citizens and the introduction of a dual system of immigrant rights was accentuated by the conclusion of the 2001 bilateral agreement between Switzerland and the EU on the free movement of individuals (the Swiss population accepted it by popular vote in 2000). From then onwards, official discourse no longer defined EU nationals as foreigners. The



agreement gave EU nationals, in a system that was to be gradually introduced until 2007, the same living and working rights as the Swiss, with the exception of voting rights (European Community 2002). Thus, legislation on foreigners no longer applies to EU citizens but to individuals from countries outside the EU. In 2005, the new Federal Act on Foreign Nationals (Bundesgesetz über die Ausländerinnen und Ausländer, AuG), which replaces the outdated 1931 ANAG and made the two-circle policy official, was approved by Swiss Parliament and by popular vote in 2006 (Federal Assembly of the Swiss Confederation 2005). The new AuG legislation, which came into effect in January 2008, creates a dual system of immigrant rights that allows freedom of movement to EU nationals, whereas the entry of non-EU immigrants is restricted to highly skilled individuals. Because of tight restrictions on the number of immigrants from non-EU countries (a maximum quota of 4,000 per year has been set), and the fact that the prospective employer of a non-EU immigrant must prove to the foreign police that no Swiss or EU citizen can fill the job, the only realistic means of immigration into Switzerland for many non-EU citizens is through marriage.

Researchers interested in studying immigration law in European countries are pointing to the importance of a gender perspective. Immigration law is based on specific notions of family norms and gender roles (Riaño & Wastl-Walter 2006; Mullaly 2007). For Van Walsum and Spijkerboer (2007), immigration law reveals how relevant patriarchal relations are thus showing the increasing intersection between ethnic and gendered discourses in European countries' immigration law. Through a gendered representation of the alien Other, immigration law is increasingly constructing contrasting representations of gender relations. European societies are being drawn in terms of gender equality and women's autonomy, while male 'third-country nationals' are being represented as archaic, patriarchal and/or violently misogynist, and female 'third-country nationals' as passive, vulnerable and oppressed (Van Walsum & Spijkerboer 2007: 6). A gender perspective is necessary to understand what ideas of family norms and gender roles are contained in immigration policies, and how they intersect with ethnic discourses, to facilitate or hinder the socio-economic participation of marriage migrants.

### *Gender culture*

Though much progress has been made in Switzerland's legal system towards gender equality, true equality of the sexes is still far from being a reality. While more women than ever before work outside the home, they remain disproportionately responsible for child-care and domestic work and are more likely to be employed on a part-time basis and to earn lower wages than men (Strub, Hüttner & Guggisberg 2005). Formal politics continued to be a male domain until 2010, a phenomenon partly resulting

from the fact that women in Switzerland first got the right to vote in 1971.<sup>1</sup> Women's economic citizenship in Switzerland is still precarious by international standards. The Global Gender Gap Index Report 2007, a 58-nation survey published by the World Economic Forum, which assesses how well countries divide resources and opportunities between their male and female populations, ranked Switzerland in 40th place, far behind most Western European countries and behind lower-income countries such as Cuba (22nd), Colombia (24th) and Costa Rica (28th). At the time of the report's production, Swiss women's estimated earned income was reported as being US\$ 25,000 and men's as US\$ 41,000, resulting in a ratio of 0.61 (Hausmann, Tyson & Zahidi 2007). By 2010, however, Switzerland, had advanced in the Gender Gap Report to 10th place, largely owing to a significant increase in female representation in government.

How can we explain the prevalence of gender inequalities in Switzerland, despite official efforts to promote the equality between women and men? German sociologist Pfau-Effinger (2000) has argued that in order to understand the gendered labour arrangements in Europe, it is necessary to examine local gender cultures and move beyond structures of economic opportunity, economic cycles and welfare state provisions. Comparing different nation-states in Western Europe, she found significant differences in prevailing ideals and values about the 'normal' gender division of labour, the desirables spheres for bringing up children or the accepted dependencies and power relations between women and men. She argues that these values and ideals constitute a gendered cultural system that forms a key framework for the social agency of individuals. Bühler and Meier Kruker (2002) have shown how institutional arrangements in Switzerland reflect prevailing gender cultures. Of all European countries, Switzerland has the second-highest proportion of women working part time (of all working women, 56 per cent work on a part-time basis); only the Netherlands is higher where 69 per cent of female employees work part time. Using this economic data, Bühler and Meier Kruker examined the correlation between local gender cultures and gender inequality on the Swiss labour market. By examining the results of popular votes on gender-relevant issues (e.g. women's right to vote, family and marital laws, regulation of abortion) between 1959 and 2004, they showed that Switzerland has significant regional differences in the cultural values and norms concerning motherhood and employment and the role of the welfare state. Gender equality issues are given much more importance in French and Italian cultural discourses than in Swiss-German ones. There is close correlation between regional gender cultures, gender inequality structures and welfare state policies. The more women-friendly voting results in the French- and Italian-speaking parts of Switzerland correspond with an overall comparatively lower degree of gender inequality. They also correspond with better supply of day care institutions as well as

school schedules that make it possible for both parents to combine a professional career with family life.

This chapter will therefore use the approach of gender culture to understand the extent to which immigration policies, as state discourses, are formulated from the perspective of a specific gender culture, and the influence that such discourses and regulations may have on the participation of foreign spouses in Swiss society.

### **11.3 The impact of family-related migration policies on the social integration of foreign spouses**

This section examines how family-related migration policies, such as gendered state discourses, shape the social integration of foreign spouses in Swiss society and the gender relations between members of the transnational couple. As explained earlier, the evaluation is carried out from the perspective of economic citizenship, which strives for the equal access of foreign spouses to spaces of social participation. It also emphasises that for women to acquire or maintain their autonomy, they must have equal access to sources of income and/or material support outside their family relations, i.e. to have paid employment and/or social benefits.

This study's methodology consists of examining the legal texts and policy documents that may potentially impact the social integration of foreign spouses. Five federal laws are examined: the federal law that regulated the conditions for admission and settlement of foreigners to Switzerland up until 2007 (ANAG 1932), the new Federal Act on Foreign Nationals that replaced the ANAG on 1 January 2008 (AuG 2005), the resolution on the integration of foreigners 2000 (Verordnung über die Integration von Ausländerinnen und Ausländern, VIntA), the directives on so-called 'law-breaking marriages and partnerships' (Weisungen: Rechtsmissbräuchliche Eheschliessungen und Partnerschaften, EAZW, 5 December 2007, Zivilgesetzbuch, ZGB) and the Swiss citizenship law (Bürgerrechtsgesetz, BüG, 1952). Federal programmes to support the integration of foreigners are also included (Integrationsförderungsprogramme, IFP, 2004-2007 and 2008-2011). Table 11.1 summarises the rights of, and stipulations for, foreign spouses from third-country states, depending on whether they are married to Swiss- or non-Swiss citizens. Since over two thirds of foreign spouses in Switzerland are women, it must be kept in mind that the situation described below mostly applies to women. An analysis of Table 11.1 reveals five important points regarding the kind of framework that Swiss family-related migration policies create for the social integration of foreign spouses.

**Table 11.1** *Family-related migration legislation: Rights of, and stipulations for, foreign spouses from third-country states<sup>2</sup>*

Regulations	Type of marriage	Rights	Stipulations
Residence permit (AuG 2005, in force 2008)	To a Swiss citizen	One-year residence permit (Type B) to 'remain with the spouse'	-Conditional to successful marriage -Living under the same roof (art. 42-43) -Not involved in a sham marriage (art. 5; ZGB 57a) -May be conditional to attending language or integration course (art. 5a)
	To a permanent resident	Settlement permit (Type C)	-Marital union still exists (art. 42-43) -Five years of marital life and five years of 'orderly' uninterrupted life in Switzerland (art. 42-43) -Proven 'successful integration' (art. 34) -Foreign spouse must not be a threat to public security and order (art. 63)
	To a resident with a yearly permit	One-year residence permit (Type B) to 'remain with the spouse'	-Conditional to successful marriage -Living under the same roof (art. 44) -Not involved in a sham marriage (art. 5; ZGB 57a) -Having an 'adequate' home and the resident partner not being dependent on welfare (art. 43) -May be conditional to attending language or integration course (art. 5a)
		Settlement permit (Type C)	-Marital union still exists (art. 44) -Resident partner lives in Switzerland -Ten years of 'orderly' uninterrupted life in Switzerland (art. 42-43) -Proven 'successful integration' (art. 34) -Foreign spouse must not be a threat to public security and order (art. 63)
Work permit (ANAG 1932, AuG 2005)	All foreign spouses ANAG until 2008	The residence permit granted to foreign spouses did not include a work authorisation. A work permit was granted only if it could be proven that no Swiss citizen was available for the job applied for. No change of job or canton of residence was authorised.	
	All foreign spouses AuG 2008 onwards	The new law grants the right to work to foreign spouses (art. 46). Before they obtain a work permit, however, foreign spouses must prove that there is no Swiss or EU citizen who can fill the job (art. 21).	
Integration (VIntA 2000, IFP 2004-2007)	All foreign spouses	- Integration measures 'need to take account of the special needs of foreign women, children and youth' (VIntA, art. 2) - Support for language courses is aimed at 'difficult-to-reach target groups such as economically inactive mothers with children, shift workers or other persons who have lived in Switzerland for many years and still have a rudimentary knowledge of a national language' (IFP)	
Naturalisation (BuG 1952)	Foreign spouses married to a Swiss	- Swiss citizenship after 5 years of uninterrupted residence in Switzerland and three years of marriage to a Swiss citizen	
	Not married to a Swiss	- Swiss citizenship after 12 years of uninterrupted residence in Switzerland	

Source: Author's compilation based on federal legislation concerning the entry, family reunification, integration, marriages and naturalisation of foreign spouses (ANAG 1932; AuG 2005; VIntA 2000; IFP; ZGB 2007; BuG 1952)

First, the above policies create a stratification of rights among married couples in Switzerland. Whereas foreign spouses from third-country states and their partners are subjected to many stipulations regarding their marriage and common lives, Swiss couples or couples from countries belonging to the EU are free to choose their motives for marriage and the length of their union. Moreover, foreign spouses are not equal before the law. Depending on whom they marry, whether a Swiss citizen, a person with permanent residency or a person with a year-round renewable permit, their rights to live and work in Switzerland and obtain Swiss citizenship vary significantly. Many such boundaries, or systems of civic stratification (Morris 2002), have been erected by the family-related migration policies of several European countries, thus leading to an increasing fragmentation of family rights in Europe (Kofman et al. and Bonizzoni this volume).

Second, foreign spouses from third-country states have a precarious residence status in their first five years in Switzerland. During that period they are granted a yearlong residence permit and are legally dependent on their partners. Their permits state that the purpose of their residence in Switzerland is 'to remain with their spouses', and the renewal of their residence permits is contingent on marriage status. Thus, in the case of foreign spouses married to Swiss citizens, the latter enjoy full rights of social, economic and political participation in Swiss society, whereas the former lack an independent status. Foreign spouses depend on their partners' will to remain married to them, and to live with them under the same roof, so they can stay in the country. The superior legal position of Swiss and resident spouses allows them to discard their immigrant spouses at will by simply moving out of the common residence, by filing a divorce or by leaving the country during the first five years of marriage. An exception to this is when violence by the Swiss or resident partner can be proven, in which case only three years of marriage under the same roof are required before an independent permit is granted to the immigrant spouse.

Third, family-related migration policies allow public authorities to intrude on the private sphere of the family. To prove if a sham marriage has taken place, or is about to, the marriage officiant or an official from the foreigners police, can visit the binational couple at their home, or request a meeting, to inquire into how the couple met, their age difference, the length of their marriage, where they live and possible payments that could have been made by the foreign spouse to the Swiss partner. These legal instruments given to government officials by the new AuG law to 'fight against abuses of marriage regulations' can be interpreted as a serious threat to the basic right of a protected private family life (Spescha 2007). Family migration policies are designed on the assumption that foreign spouses will try to abuse the Swiss system.

Fourth, family-related migration policies hinder the economic citizen-

ship of foreign spouses because they indirectly put them in a situation of economic dependence on their Swiss spouses. Residence permits for foreign spouses are mainly designed to allow them 'to remain with their spouses' but not to generate economic activity. Such permits allow foreign spouses to work as long as it can be proven that there is no Swiss or EU citizen who can fulfill the job. Foreign spouses from third-country states receive a Type B residence permit that must be renewed every year. Because most Swiss employers require permanent residence, obtained on a Type C settlement, especially for skilled positions, in practice it is very difficult for foreign spouses holding an annually renewable permit to obtain jobs, especially of a skilled nature, during their first five years of residence. After such a long period of precarious employment, immigrant women inevitably may lose their skills and the prospects for obtaining quality jobs in their professions of origin are drastically reduced (Riaño & Baghdadi 2007b). Their Swiss spouses, on the other hand, have much better prospects of obtaining good jobs because they are protected under the Foreigner Law, they are Swiss citizens, they speak the local language and they have Swiss qualifications and access to a professional network. Foreign spouses inevitably earn much less than their Swiss husbands and thus become not only dependent on them, but also in a much weaker power position within the couple. Within the context of economic inequality, it is difficult to think of equal gender relations among transnational couples. The precarious situation of immigrant women on the labour market is illustrated by the fact that in terms of economic participation and salary level (SFS 2007), they occupy the lowest position (64.1 per cent), behind Swiss men (86.3 per cent), foreign men (83.3 per cent) and Swiss women (73.6 per cent).

Fifth, immigration and integration policies, such as the AuG and VIntA, are founded on traditional ideas about the division of labour between men and women. Such laws view foreign women as mothers and wives, not as workers. The VintA law (art. 2), for example, specifically states that integration measures 'must take account of the special needs of (foreign) women'; however, 'special needs' is not intended to address the discrimination that foreign women experience on the Swiss labour market because of their gender and origin (Riaño & Baghdadi 2007b), but to the supposedly self-inflicted problem of their isolation and limited knowledge of the local language. As explained earlier, the 2004-2007 federal programme to support the integration of foreigners (IFP) states that language courses are aimed at 'difficult-to-reach target groups such as economically inactive mothers with children, shift workers or other persons who have lived in Switzerland for many years and still have a rudimentary knowledge of a national language'. The 2008-2011 integration programme is conceived under similar premises: foreign women with pre-school children need to be specially supported because their child-care

tasks isolate them and hinder their learning the local language. However, as shown above, this policy misses the underlying reasons for the isolation of many women. In fact, current policies governing family-related migration promote the isolation of foreign mothers by confining them to the role of 'mothers and wives', hence impeding their professional integration. Further, integration policies consider only those women who have rudimentary language knowledge. There is also need for perfection courses that will enable educated foreign women to obtain skilled jobs. Although current integration policies at first sight seem to address 'gender-specific needs', in practice, they not only project a negative view of foreign women, but also consolidate their social position in Swiss society to 'caregiver' and that of their husbands to 'breadwinner'.

#### **11.4 Immigration regulations, patriarchal values and gender inequality**

This analysis of Swiss immigration and integration policies shows that rather than creating favourable conditions for foreign spouses to participate in Swiss society, such policies create a constraining framework for women's social and economic citizenship. Their citizenship is best characterised as precarious, particularly in the initial phase of settlement. Family-related migration policies construct foreign spouses as having to fulfil the reproductive role of mothers and spouses. They place foreign spouses in direct and indirect legal and economic dependency on their partners, thus creating a situation of unequal power relations between members of the transnational couple. Contradicting Switzerland's current efforts towards gender equality, family-related migration policies are shaped by a patriarchal gender culture. By combining representations of home, domesticity and part-time paid employment with ideas about femininity, this culture identifies migrant women rather than men – notably, Swiss men – as caregivers and domestic workers. Ideas about masculinity are reflected in notions of a male 'breadwinner' and the suitability of men – notably, Swiss men – rather than migrant women to participate in the workforce. Immigration policies are further oriented by ethnic discourses that view foreign spouses from non-EU countries in a negative light: as possible violators of the law and as posing problems of integration because of their low education, situation of isolation and low knowledge of the local language.

The precarious residence status of foreign spouses from third-country states is the result of a Foreigner Law that does not give marriage migrants the intrinsic right to live in Switzerland. It gives them only a 'derivative' right, in which marital life is their sole purpose for staying in the country. Such a law is for Spescha (2007) an expression of 'structural violence' –

a concept created by the peace studies scholar Johan Galtung – which denotes a form of violence by a given social structure or institution that systematically harms people by preventing them from fully satisfying their basic human needs. Laws that cause discrimination, unequal distribution of resources or the obstruction of emancipatory efforts can be interpreted as forms of structural violence.

Family-related migration policies in Switzerland can be interpreted as containing two parallel but contradictory discourses. On the one hand, family reunification policies are based on a human rights discourse that legitimates opening Switzerland's borders to marriage migrants for reasons of family reunion. At the same time, such policies are also based on an ethnically biased discourse that interprets marriage migrants as potential abusers of Swiss immigration regulations, a discourse that legitimates the restriction of their civil rights and the policing of family relations. Once marriage migrants are allowed into Swiss society, their civil rights of residence, work and freedom of movement are restricted, and made contingent on continued marriage to their Swiss partners. Immigration law thus confers legitimacy on women who enter as citizens' wives, but then only to the extent that they are prepared to give up their autonomy. Further, migrant women lose their legitimacy by leaving their citizen husbands. Swiss immigration law is by no means an isolated case: feminist researchers report the same trend as seen in the Swiss case for several countries belonging to the EU (Van Walsum & Spijkerboer 2007; Rais-siguier 2007; Gill & Sharma 2007).

Binational marriages are a particular case of asymmetric power relations within the family: whereas the Swiss husband enjoys full citizenship rights, those of the foreign spouse are limited. Swiss immigration regulations do not foresee supporting the economic citizenship of foreign spouses because they are expected to 'remain with their husbands'. An empirical study carried out by Riaño and Baghdadi (2007b) on the professional integration of 57 skilled migrant women from countries outside the EU – the majority of whom entered Switzerland as marriage migrants – shows that foreign spouses experience considerable pressure from Swiss society (families, neighbours and employers) to conform to a child-rearing role. Traditional gender roles are thus, directly or indirectly, set: the Swiss man as breadwinner and the foreign woman as homemaker. In this sense, binational families can be interpreted as sites where patriarchal relations are perpetuated.

Switzerland is no exception. Van Walsum (2004) has revealed how contradictory, Eurocentric views are inherent in the immigration and integration laws of many European countries. 'Western culture' is exemplified by the liberal, secular norms of universal human rights, equal treatment of men and women and individual freedom. In contrast to these norms, the cultural norms of non-Western immigrants and of Is-



lamic immigrants, in particular, are perceived to be religiously inspired, patriarchal and having no place for the emancipated woman. As already stated, assumed ethnic differences – and the desire to prevent ethnic deviance – serve to legitimate the policing of family relations in the context of immigration law.

Unequal gender relations within migrant families can thus not simply be interpreted as resulting from supposedly 'backward' ethnic values, as often contended in integration debates. Rather, they should be seen as an outcome of the patriarchal gender culture that underpins immigration regulations, in particular, and Swiss society, in general.

## 11.5 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed family-related migration policies in Switzerland, trying to understand the kind of framework that they create for the social integration of foreign spouses in binational marriages and for gender relations among members of the transnational couple. The analysis has focused on the views and values that are inherent in such policies – interpreted here as state discourses – regarding gender roles and the value of immigrants for Swiss society. Furthermore, addressed here has been the question of whether the rights and obligations that are contained in family migration policies provide an adequate basis for equal gender relations among members of the binational couple.

This chapter concludes that family-related migration policies stand in opposition to Switzerland's current efforts towards gender equality. While Swiss men and women have acquired at least formal equality within the Swiss Constitution, and many efforts are currently being made by the Swiss state to promote gender equality in all spheres of society, developments in family-related migration legislation have been less emancipatory. To win autonomy, this chapter stated, migrant women must have access to economic citizenship – that is, to paid employment and social benefits outside family relations; however, in order to do that, migrant women must struggle with the migration regulations that provide little or no scope for gaining access to paid employment. To the extent that they are committed to the responsibility of childrearing, and are constrained by migration regulations to compete on an equal basis on the labour market, they remain dependent on their Swiss husbands.

Three arguments are put forward in this chapter. First, it seems paradoxical that many efforts are being made to promote more gender equality among Swiss couples, but at the level of binational couples – made up by a Swiss national and a foreign spouse – this aim is actually being hindered by Swiss migration policies. Single-nationality Swiss couples are definitely more equal than transnational ones. Second, we need to chal-

lenge the simplistic, Eurocentric view that sees migrant women in transnational marriages as victims of poverty and backwardness, who escape to a wealthy and advanced West to achieve gender emancipation. Third, we need to question the problematic idea, often contended in European integration debates, that sees unequal gender relations among migrant families as supposedly resulting from their 'backward' ethnic values. Clearly, the patriarchal values that underpin Swiss family migration policies play a main role in hindering the possibility of gender equality within binational couples. Van Walsum and Spijkerboer (2007: book synopsis) interpret this phenomenon as 'Europe's unresolved gender conflict'. For them, immigration policies in many European states situate gender conflicts outside of the national order, projecting them onto non-western countries, exotic cultures, clandestine labour and criminal organisations. In doing so, immigration law sustains the illusion that gender conflicts have moved beyond the pale of European experience.

The impact of family-related migration policies on gender relations in Swiss and European societies needs to be further investigated. The issue of whether transnational marriages between a Swiss national and a foreigner promote more equal gender relations or, rather, the persistence of patriarchal structures needs to be looked at in much more detail. An analysis of variations across Swiss cantons and among European countries would be most useful for drawing regional comparisons.

## Notes

- 1 Women in the Swiss Canton of Appenzell Innerroden first got the right to vote in 1990, when Federal Supreme Court judges decided to interpret the Constitution in a way that women were included in the term 'citizens' and were thus entitled to vote.
- 2 This regulation has been in place since 1990. Before then, citizenship law gave privileged rights to Swiss men. Those who married a foreign citizen were able to pass Swiss nationality on to their wives and children, whereas Swiss women were not entitled to the same right.

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## **Section IV**

Transnational family lives and practices





## 12 Transnational family life and female migration in Italy: One or multiple patterns?

*Ludovica Banfi and Paolo Boccagni*

### 12.1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Research on transnational family life – that is, the manifold ongoing interactions between migrants, especially women, and the family members left behind – has resulted in a growing body of empirical studies over the last decade. Seldom, however, have they been conducted in a comparative perspective and much less so with respect to European Union receiving countries. The chapter draws on original empirical data to provide a novel comparison between transnational family attitudes, practices and perspectives in three migration flows, linking Italy to such diverse areas as Poland, Ukraine and Ecuador.

The three sending countries basically share some relevant traits in terms of time of immigration, gender balance and niches of employment in the receiving labour market. Each of them has produced, over the last decade or so, mostly female migrant flows to Western Europe – involving temporary or longer-term emigration to Russia, Poland, Germany and Mediterranean countries – from Ukraine; to Germany, Belgium and later France and Italy from Poland; to Spain and Italy from Ecuador.

The original data upon which the chapter builds come from different research sites. In relation to Ukrainian and Polish immigration, we rely on a national non-representative sample of interviews from 2003 to 2005 conducted with immigrant women working in the domestic sector in Italy.<sup>2</sup> Most were Eastern European women, silently ‘colonising’ the domestic labour market in the country. This source has been complemented with a period of ethnography and in-depth interviews of Ukrainian women working in Italy, conducted by Ludovica Banfi, and participant observation following some interviewees in their summer journeys back home (Chernovtsi Oblast). As for Ecuadorian immigration, the chapter relies first of all on an in-depth study conducted through ethnography and biographical interviewing in a local area in Northern Italy (in the Trento province) and, to a lesser extent, in a local sending community in Ecuador (Pasaje in the El Oro province). This original source has been supplemented with preliminary field research on Ecuadorians’ transnational attitudes and social practices, which built on the unique opportunity provided by immigrants’ involvement, from a distance, in 2006 national elections.<sup>3</sup>

After an overview of the literature on the familial dimension of transnational immigrant processes, we will analyse the main commonalities and differences among the three cases in relation to their socio-demographic profile, their driving forces, the role of factors such as networks, migration and immigrant policies, and the relevance of distance to the homeland. We will then focus on the domain of transnational family life, framing it from a threefold viewpoint: the evolution of intergenerational relationships at a distance and the adaptations they produce on the life course of those involved; the after-effects of familial separation, provisional or not, on gender and couple relationships; and the other side of transnational family life – that is, the impact of remittances on social and community structures in the receiving countries.

## **12.2 On transnationalism and family life at a distance in migration studies**

The concept of transnationalism<sup>4</sup> has appeared high on the agenda of recent migration studies debate and is by now common to a wide body of literature. It basically shares the assumption that more and more immigrants continue in numerous ways to exert influence at a distance on the social life back home. One of the areas where the transnational approach has proved more helpful, in recent years, has to do with immigrant families, namely, with the impact of migration on family structures. This chapter provides an empirical, comparative case study on the social functioning of transnational families. It looks at the transnational social life that can be inferred in the everyday life experience of family members living at a distance as an effect of labour migration, displacing many of them – increasingly, mothers – from their own country. This approach has resulted over the last decade in mostly qualitative and multi-sited (Marcus 1995) empirical studies concerned with two principal topics. The first regards the development of intergenerational and conjugal relationships at a distance, notably the personal experiences of transnational motherhood (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila 1997; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001). Research here focuses on the influence exerted by migration on the representations and practices of motherhood – that is, how mother-child relationships are adapted and modified, once they can no longer rely (for a shorter or longer time) on physical proximity. On the other hand, it may also deal with transnational childhood (Parreñas 2005) or the consequences of women's migration on children left behind, concerning their upbringing, affective needs, inclusion in education and peer groups, and future life expectations (see Bonizzoni this volume). A second central topic, complementary to the first, is related to ways of managing and reproducing familial (and generally social) ties at a distance over time

(Bryceson & Vuorela 2003). The assumption here is that transnational family life may result in a new familial arrangement, not necessarily ending up in family disruption, nor set to vanish immediately once family reunion has taken place.

Altogether the very notion of transnational family still seems in itself little more than a heuristic device, given the huge diversity of underlying family structures and, even more so, migration systems (Landolt & Wei Da 2005). Through our exploratory field-work in three cases, we nevertheless wonder if any relevant commonality may be detected concerning ways of living family life at a distance. We wonder whether such commonalities – if any – are due more to the social and economic features of the three inflows, or to their interaction with Italian migration policies and the local structures of opportunities (especially in the domestic labour market), or with any other social factor to be empirically analysed. To what extent and why may we detect one pattern in family life at a distance of immigrants from Ukraine, Poland and Ecuador? In what respects should we rather expect three different patterns, or maybe many patterns or as many patterns as the families involved (i.e. no common pattern at all)?

### **12.3 Three women-led immigrant flows to Italy: commonalities and differences**

All three immigration flows are relatively new in the context of Italy. While Polish immigration had reached a certain level by the end of the 1980s, large-scale Ukrainian and Ecuadorian flows to Italy started in the mid-1990s. A common turning point was marked by the 2002 national regularisation. Those who regularised at the time accounted for more than half the Ecuadorians and the Ukrainians being documented, as of 2006 (ISTAT 2006).

In Ukraine, the opening up of borders in 1991, after national independence, enabled citizens' access to the international and, in particular, EU labour markets. Open borders provided a novel opportunity to improve the standard of living by means of temporary labour stays (Malinowska 2004). According to a 2001 survey by the Institute of Sociology of NAS Ukraine, 10.2 per cent of Ukrainian households members have some experience of temporary labour migration. In fact, the number of labour migrants is even larger, since each household may include several persons involved. Further estimates, however, exceed such data by far. Some economists claim there may be up to 5 million people abroad. Until 1998, women dominated Ukrainian emigration. Only in the last few years have men started to increase among new immigrants abroad (Pirozhkov, Malinovskaya & Homra 2003).

Despite being a relatively recent destination country, Italy seems to be characterised by a trend towards long-term residence. Alongside Spain, the country has indeed turned out to be one of the most popular receiving countries since the mid-1990s. Documented migrants from Ukraine now amount to some 115,000 persons, thus ranking as the fourth-largest immigrant group in Italy (ISTAT 2006). Overall, it is the inflow where women (some 83 per cent) most outnumber men and are overrepresented in the domestic sector.

As for Polish immigration to Italy, the first women arrived in the 1980s, thanks to religious-based networks that enabled finding a job in the domestic sector (Andall 2000). However, available data suggests that the Polish inflow has undergone – at least in terms of documented migration – a process of stabilisation, unlike most other Eastern European ones (Weber 2004). This may be due to the prevailing orientation towards a circulatory migration pattern, thus avoiding any regularisation altogether. Documented migrants from Poland now number over 73,000 (ISTAT 2006), ranking as the seventh-largest immigrant group in Italy. Seventy-two per cent are women. While Germany was once the most common destination for Ukrainians, Italy emerged in the 1990s as a long-term destination country (Wallace & Stola 2001). As for gender differences, the Polish case basically mirrors the Ukrainian one, albeit with relevant variations in the single receiving countries. With respect to changes in European migration patterns post-enlargement, the Italian case – where Polish immigration is still highly feminised – is quite different than the United Kingdom, where there is higher male migration and Poles fill a wider range of occupational niches.<sup>5</sup> In part this is due to the fact that in May 2004 the UK, Ireland and Sweden were the only countries granting workers from new EU member states free access to their labour markets. The majority of individuals registering in the UK Worker Registration Scheme since May 2004 have been Polish (62 per cent, male accounting for 58 per cent of them) (Ruhs 2006).

In the Ecuadorian context, international emigration dates back to the early 1960s, with a male-led flow that gradually settled in the United States. This involved mostly peasant communities from a few Andean areas (Kyle 2000). Only as an effect of the crisis culminating in the late 1990s, however, has emigration turned into a national phenomenon, increasingly directed to European countries such as Spain and, to a lesser extent, Italy (Herrera, Carrillo & Torres 2005). Both countries turned out to be privileged destinations of the migration explosion originating in 1999, sweeping all components of the local population in terms of social classes and sending regions (FLACSO 2008). Documented immigrants from Ecuador in Italy currently amount to some 70,000 persons, 61 per cent of whom are female (ISTAT 2007), most having begun arriving in the late 1990s, probably as tourists. While most undocumented immigrants at

the time gained access to the 2002 amnesty, a formal visa requirement was introduced in 2003. Ever since, new Ecuadorian immigration to Europe has resulted mostly from family reunions, leading to a relative increase in flows of males.

Immigrant women working in Italy from each of the three countries are strongly segregated in the domestic sector.<sup>6</sup> As such, literature on the feminisation of migration in Italy has tended to focus on domestic work.<sup>7</sup> In all three cases, the 'start-up' of massive emigration seems marked by a tacit, grass-roots process of gender self-selection.<sup>8</sup> While in Eastern European flows, this gender imbalance apparently increased after the collapse of Communism, in the case of Ecuador, some argue that such a gender pattern may be regarded as little less than a peculiarity in migration history (Gratton 2007). Whatever the actual novelty of this gender distribution, factors accounting for it include:

- firstly, a widespread demand for care-related (and typically female) labour in receiving Southern European countries with a traditionally 'familialist' welfare regime (Ferrera 1996);
- secondly, the widespread reliance on information and contacts provided by (mainly female) acquaintances compared to 'stronger ties' (relatives and close friends) in the country of destination;
- finally, the opportunity for many women to move away from familial arrangements imbued with male-chauvinistic ways of life – or even broken up by divorce or separation – without abdicating their responsibilities to the families (especially to their children) at home.

Overall, family disruption is commonly regarded as an issue preceding emigration. The latter serves as a turning point, which affects already weak familial relationships, rather than being the only cause of their widespread crisis (Herrera 2005; Pedone 2006).

## **12.4 Why leave? Driving forces, subjective aims and chain migration**

In the Ecuadorian case, multiple causes were behind the late 1990s' sudden emigration increase (FLACSO 2008). The fundamental one lies in the sudden impoverishment triggered by 1999's severe economic crisis, which culminated in a defaulting to external debt and the collapse of several banks (despite a contentious 'freezing' of bank deposits), until the formal dollarisation of the national economy (World Bank 2004). In this gloomy scenario marked by intense political distrust and an apparent lack of any future prospects, migration is increasingly perceived by an increasing share of the population – not necessarily the more indigent or the unemployed – as a viable (or arguably as the only) option to earn a decent

livelihood for one's family and possibly improve one's position or, as Ecuadorians put it, *para salir adelante* ('to get ahead').

As far as Poland and Ukraine are concerned, a clear driving force of westward female emigration lies in high levels of job loss and unemployment, the result of the last fifteen years' economic restructuring into a market economy (Morokvasic 2003; Coyle 2003) (though Ukraine being in a much earlier phase of the transition period). Although the end of Communism did not exert the same effects everywhere, all the countries involved experienced a dramatic shift from a state economy to a market economy whose main features were privatisation of state-owned productive assets, structural adjustment policies, price and wage liberalisation, real wage decline and price increases. The overall result was high unemployment, poverty and dramatic new levels of social inequality (Bunce 1999; UNIFEM 2006).

A common characteristic can also be highlighted in nearly all the narratives of the women we interviewed: before leaving home they were rarely living in conditions of utter deprivation. As some of our Ecuadorian immigrants would probably contend, 'no one would ever starve there' due to an abundance of natural resources in the country. On the other hand, in rural areas in Eastern European countries, the viable tradition of cultivating land allowed for a decent family livelihood. While, generally speaking, economic reasons account for growing emigration, the major aim underlying most migration projects – making them especially relevant in a transnational perspective – has to do specifically with supporting children at home and building a better future for them.

Another common trait lies in the undetermined yet generally high rate of divorced, separated or widowed women. The absence of a husband and hence of a second, or even first, income to support the family deeply influences women's decisions. Divorced and separated women generally report that their ex-husband provides no economic help in sustaining children. Furthermore, Eastern European countries have undertaken a restructuring of social security programmes. State policies no longer try to assist women in balancing work and family. Instead, they have reinforced the tradition of women's sole responsibility for reproductive work and have cut (or allowed the devaluation of) state subsidies for child-care institutions, maternity leave and parental sick leave (UNIFEM 2006).

Ukrainian and Ecuadorian women's decision to leave seems aimed, firstly, at providing for children's livelihood (including education and health expenses) as well as to pay children's university fees, and, secondly, at building (or renovating) a new house in the motherland.<sup>9</sup> Often emigration is compelled by emergency circumstances such as the illness of a family member, resulting in the need for expensive drugs no longer provided by the national health systems. In the case of Polish women, our interviewees revealed other motivations: while some younger women

departed because of unemployment, others did in order to sustain children or to pay their university fees. In Polish respondents' accounts, migration often still sounds as though it's a strategy aiming to improve consumption: new furniture, fancy clothes, etc. Among older Polish women, migration seems instead like a way to supplement their own pensions. As Morawska (2000) suggests, migrants from Eastern Europe can rely on some relevant, albeit non-determinant, welfare benefits. While this seems to hold true for Poland, it is not really the case for Ukraine, and much less so for Ecuador.

In all three cases, migration processes generally do not seem to enable savings relevant enough to start a new business back home – though this may emerge as a future wish, indefinitely postponed after more urgent objectives have been realised. Remittances, in other words, maintain a crucial familial function, but hardly ever, for the time being, are they used for investment (Goldring 2004).<sup>11</sup>

Most women leave having supposedly only temporary migration projects. The feasibility of such expectations, however, significantly differs from one country to the other. A short-term orientation is especially apparent in the accounts of Polish women, who often leave to take the place of a relative or a friend already working in Italy and expect an extremely brief initial stay. Instead, in the Ecuadorian and Ukrainian cases, the initial expectation of a brief emigration ('some years, no more' was a common refrain) is met with the everyday experience of hard work, slow savings and even slower progress. All this makes going back home a still cherished option, but viable only in the middle term; being done in the short term mostly suggests a straightforward failure in one's migration.

It is also worth comparing the three cases from the viewpoint of the social capital they rely on, this crucial meso-level of analysis (Faist 2000). Polish women have been at the forefront of the new paradigm of cross-border mobility and work in Europe (Wallace & Stola 2001; Morokvasic 2003), i.e. commuting migration. As a matter of fact, they can rely on strong pre-existing social networks in Italy, as well as the greater viability of their circular migration. As our interviews indicate, when leaving as well as later on, they can mostly get easily access to a workplace, thanks to an extended ethnic network providing for it. These networks comprising mostly of weak ties may produce different forms of support: most of all finding a job and some accommodation. The two usually coincide; when arriving in Italy, migrant women usually end up working as live-in caregivers. This enables them to gain access to a basic livelihood, besides being protected from controls should they be undocumented. If they become unemployed (elderly caregivers usually lose their jobs when the assisted person dies), immigrant women can go back to Poland and wait there for a new job offer in Italy. As one respondent told us, this also allows better comparison of job proposals and to avoid 'job-buying', a last resort

for women who cannot draw on effective social networks. It is worth noting that Polish women's priority to return whenever they like may necessarily result in their choice to not become documented in Italy. Women with younger children at home preferred, even after spending some years abroad, not to become legal because regularity – in concrete terms, having a regular contract – would allow them only one month's leave (Banfi 2008).

For Ukrainian migrant women, social networks seem to play a much weaker role. This is partly due to a more recent and unstructured migration system. Unlike Polish women, most Ukrainians resort to travel agencies or other intermediaries to provide their visa and organise their journey. Rarely do they have relatives or friends waiting for them in Italy; or possibly, they rely on weak ties that do not provide much support. Many of the women we interviewed did not actually know what their final destination would be when leaving, and the first information about the destination country was provided by women travelling on the same bus to Italy. At the end of their journey, many of our interviewees ended up in some square of a metropolitan city that served as a meeting place for migrants of various ethnic background, where jobs in the domestic sector and accommodations (i.e. one bed in mixed, overcrowded apartments) were 'sold' by migrants of various nationalities (including Italian). Job-selling in the domestic sector seems quite frequent among workers from Eastern Europe, but it is in the Ukrainian community where it seems more widespread. The lack of resources (house and job, above all) could be the main reason for this. Indeed, its origin could be traced back to the institutionalised practice of *blat* under socialism, i.e. a non-monetary and reciprocal exchange enabling access to consumer goods in shortage (Maz-zacurati 2004).

In the Ecuadorian case, too, the relevance of parental networks at a distance has been widely emphasised, at least insofar as they may direct new immigrants to a one particular local context, depending on compatriots' informal contacts (Lagomarsino 2006; Boccagni 2009). The role of a notoriously unequal and fragmented resource, such as immigrants' social capital, even increased paradoxically after 2003's enforcement of an EU visa. This resulted in family reunions and 'nominal summons' as nearly the only viable channels to Europe for would-be Ecuadorian immigrants. When leaving the country, the role of family networks is furthermore critical in supporting emigrants, to varying extents, in the debts they mostly have to contract.



## 12.5 Family life at a distance: On the scope and functioning of transnational social fields

What happens to conjugal and affective relationships, after a mother and wife leaves her family? Building a life space including no less than two distinct places and separated by juridical and geographical borders means both introducing strangeness in a familial world and creating familiarity (or even intimacy) in order to relieve the consequences of that very strangeness (Weber 2004; Baldassar, Baldock & Wilding 2007). As a result of migration, one's family space (and structure) may undergo manifold transformations.

The overall picture of family life at a distance in the three cases analysed is a highly differentiated one. Rather than all-encompassing transnational social fields (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004), most women's narratives reflect a set of fragmented, highly particularistic relationships that are not always predictable in terms of how solid or persistent they prove. As significant as crossborder contacts may turn out to be, especially in the affective realm, only to some extent and given certain conditions can they somehow act as a surrogate for physical proximity.

### 12.5.1 *Evolving intergenerational relationships*

The age structure of women in the three streams is reflected in the age of the children left behind at the time of emigration. Polish and Ukrainian respondents usually left home when their children were teenagers or adults (i.e. already parents) themselves. In Ecuador the practice of leaving infants behind – though officially stigmatised, whatever the underlying reasons or constraints – is quite widespread (Pedone 2006). In fact, over the last decade this practice seems to have gained some unwritten, grass-roots legitimisation.

When a woman emigrates her children are left in the charge of some relative, often a woman herself, as other studies confirm (Parreñas 2001, 2005; Balsamo 2006). Women left behind in the country of origin bear the main responsibility of the caring and social reproduction work. Even in the case of married women, rarely is a husband the only and/or principal caregiver of his children. Often children are raised by grandmothers, sisters, daughters-in-law and, though less frequently, neighbours or paid caregivers.

Our field-work suggests that in Ukrainian transnational families especially, children in the country of origin are raised by relatives other than fathers. Usually migrant women send remittances to the children's carer, thus assuring the children's (and often the carer's) welfare. Economic remittances, however, are by no means the only resource they may exchange. When a migrant mother leaves behind adolescent children, the

children are often left to care for themselves. In this case, the elder daughter (or a daughter-in-law) may have to look after younger siblings and often after fathers.

The separation between a mother and her children, above all when they are very young, is an obvious source of pain and guilt. While commuting Polish women are able to return home often, Ukrainians and Ecuadorians rarely see their families for several years, at least until they have a residence permit. In the Ecuadorian case most of all, the extent and depth of communication at a distance, even in family relationships, seems constantly jeopardised by the sending country's remoteness, which obviously impacts the feasibility of visits back home. This might only lose relevance on the grounds of communication technology, which for all the women's groups we happened to study still remains much less widespread and more 'socially selective' than one would expect. Most migrants we met were clearly committed to keeping in touch with their families back home. Yet, among Ecuadorian women, the frequency of return trips to the motherland – whether sometimes once a year, if even ever – should not be assumed to indicate different degrees of attachment to one's family, nor one's unease in the receiving society, but rather the actual 'success' of one's migration process.

Migrant women leaving infant children behind express the most painful aspects of transnational motherhood as they miss out on key moments such as birthdays, First Communions, etc. However close one may feel, physical distance remains an objective constraint, more much so when it cannot be bridged by frequent, circular migration. This applies most obviously to critical events such as the serious illness or the death of a family member.

[You can participate] only with your own thoughts... as I know from the experience of my mother's death. [...] We are accustomed, there [in Ecuador], to hold a wake at the dead person's home [...]. That day they did so, then they carried her to the cemetery... [Here in Italy] we had a mass, the priest prayed for my mother's soul too. [...] But at the funeral's time [night in Italy] I was alone. I was calling my daughter all the time, and she was telling me: 'We are almost at the cemetery now', 'We are praying'... it was awful. (R., Ecuador, 45 years old, in Italy for five years)

[Since I have been in Italy] everything has changed, life has changed... some things in good ways, some things in bad ways... this has changed: that I have earned money and I have sent some of it home... life has changed because here I have gained this money, but I lost my husband.... and so it's more what I have lost than what I've gained... I always feel guilty, I always feel that it is my

fault he died... (A., Ukraine, 48 years old, in Italy for five years)

Also very painful for transnational migrants is the experience of not being recognised as mother by their own children.

I call him [the child left behind] every day, I speak to him, I tell him I love him, also the other day... But he calls my mother 'Mummy', he says that he has a second mother and that's me. I am not the first mother, I am the second one... and this happened after seven months that I was here. He lives with my mother. (I., Poland, 50 years old, in Italy for three years)

My daughters... it is not easy. They were happy for me but they suffered a lot, they missed me a lot. For them it was like I was dead. And now that they have settled in Italy, we have realised that this void... all the time we spent apart will never be filled, there is always a gap between us... our ties were broken, we had to restart from the beginning. They had changed, they were different. Something terrible. From when she was fourteen to eighteen years old, I was not there. And my eldest daughter... she came to Italy, leaving her two-year-old boy... It seems like there is a war, without shootings, but there is a war, this is the feeling. (O., Ukraine, 53 years old, in Italy for nine years)

According to the popular wisdom of many Ecuadorian women we interviewed, leaving one's children in their infancy, albeit painful and regrettable, is supposed to be relatively safe – provided grandfathers, sometimes fathers or even elder brothers, take care of them. But leaving adolescent children may be much worse. Indeed, it may imply losing any control on them. Many young mothers we met apparently expected to be able to reunite with their children in Italy before that critical phase. This somehow holds true also among Ukrainian parents. A proverb cited by a few respondents went: 'Young children, small problems; older children, bigger problems'.

When your daughter is seventeen, she falls in love, in this very moment it's hard and I was so scared for her... I was scared also for my son, that he would follow bad ways, but thank God I am happy about the persons they became, because they are good. I brought them up by the phone, as I happened to call them ten times a day. (O., Ukraine, 50 years old, in Italy for six years)

Providing for children's livelihood stands out. It is the only stated, self-conscious mission of the new life after leaving children behind, suppos-

edly for a short time. Emphasis on the material gains that emigration should accrue somewhat softens the relevance, let alone the suffering, of their actual affective loss.

You feel stronger as you say: 'Well, I'm working for them... that's all!' Stronger, I mean that... you think: 'Who am I here for?' I think: 'If I was alone, what's the point of staying here? Why do I stay here, making sacrifices, staying alone... why?' It wouldn't make sense. (M., Ecuador, 25 years old, in Italy for five years)

Women retain ties with children left behind by sending remittances, communicating at a distance and visiting home. As for the relevance and feasibility of communication at a distance, all the transnational mothers we interviewed were accustomed to keeping regularly in contact with their families (especially with the children themselves and their carers), mostly by phone, from every day to once a week. While communicating with their families, most mothers seem intentionally to leave out, or even disguise, any detailed reference to their own life conditions, including the difficulties and troubles they may be facing.

Whenever I call them up, they tell me what happens there, what they're doing, or how's my child doing – what about school, what he did, what he didn't... and anything more about him. All about my family: what's happening, what will happen... all about them. If they ask me how do I do here, fine? And I – even when I feel bad – I always tell them I feel well. 'Cause I – I don't want them to suffer. So, I'd never... tell them how I do really feel. (Y., Ecuador, 27 years old, in Italy for four years)

Visits home may represent a way to try to rebuild the earlier relationship. Also, the length of time spent at home is important. Some women, however, remember returning home as a painful experience; both they and their kids stay together for a few weeks and then split up again.

### 12.5.2 *Evolving couple and gender relationships*

In this section we consider the effects of lasting spatial distance on the relationship between the members of a couple. What perception do immigrant women retain about the possibility of preserving their marriage despite physical separation? Does female migration necessarily end up splitting a couple? In the transnational family does a woman's departure represent a reaction to an already troublesome conjugal life? Or is it a new form of family arrangement? Or even a new transnational type of female and family identity (Colombo 2003; Balsamo 2006)? The relationship

between migration and family disruption is hardly straightforward. A precarious or even broken partnership seems to trigger a woman's decision to leave, maybe more often being the case than decisions reflecting a common, household alternative. This seems true for all three national groups.

Among the married women we interviewed, there is widespread perception that one's conjugal relationship is seriously jeopardised by extended physical separation. Despite this, the relationship at a distance with their partners, even when it does endure, generally seems to occupy a lower rung of the 'affection hierarchy' than their relationship with children. Many women report communicating longer with their children (especially the younger ones) than with their husbands.

At the root of a couple's split supposedly lies, in our interviewees' words, one's husband's unfaithfulness. Interestingly, in the Ukrainian respondents' perception, the eventual separation is strongly framed as the husband's incapability of staying alone 'for a few years'.

I wouldn't say that we feel more apart with the children, no, because we often call, they tell me their lives... of course you always feel a sort of... distance. But concerning my husband [left at home] you never know what to think... To tell the truth, our relationship gets colder and colder... yeah, because nowadays here we [she and her female friends] spend our spare time together, we go out together, et cetera – and they [Ukrainian husbands left behind], too, live with each other... and we always need to close one eye, try not to say bad words on the phone...

(Interviewer): Not all goes smooth... I understand... you feel more the distance with your husband...

(Respondent): Yes, more with my husband. Of course, I will never let my husband leave me... I will definitely run home before because children need both parents, the mother and the father. But it is really difficult, you know... I know many families that divorced after she migrated. Because in Ukraine men always find other women to live with and, unfortunately, a wife in Italy can't do anything from here. (L., Ukraine, 39 years old, in Italy for four years)

Whilst men are often blamed for the end of the relationship, other Ukrainian interviewees refer to women's responsibility, too. Whoever is to be blamed, the end of a relationship is always framed as a matter of unfaithfulness, due to the partners' living far apart. There is a general consensus among Ukrainian women, however, that the greater risk of a definitive rupture applies to relatively younger couples.<sup>10</sup>

In much the same way, an Ecuadorian interviewee frames the troubles in couples living apart as a result of 'cultural imprinting', rather than of

the apparent and objective obstacles created by physical remoteness. In this perspective, many problems are supposed to derive from their common, self-blaming collective representation as Latinos. This label, while being a potential source of proud self-identification, is instead constructed by most women we interviewed as a natural source of irresponsibility, applying especially to men:

When one leaves... I don't know, it seems that love is like a seed: wherever you go, it's going to grow... to take root elsewhere... so, it's inevitable, as your life is right there, and I must admit that, unfortunately, we are – as Latinos – a little irresponsible, aren't we? Our man, above all, he is very masculine, you know? Very macho and irresponsible... we know that a woman there [in Ecuador] has children, has a family... while a man cares only for himself, no more... that is, generally speaking, Latino people are like this: men are irresponsible... and even, in some cases, even women... (R., Ecuador, 44 years old, in Italy for four years)

Women's emphasis on their own partners' irresponsibility (often ending in a comprehensively stereotypical, negative representation of men) is paralleled by a proud celebration of their own role as the actual 'pillars of the family'. This may relieve their pain and possibly guilt for leaving their children behind.

How is it that one leaves, disappears, even forgets one's children... one's family? You can't do that... still, that's what happens so often. Men do go away and forget everything... That's why you can see more women than men, right here... women keep helping their children to go forward, that's what happens most, you know? It's women who are in charge of the family... it's a mother who gives birth to her child, so it's she who is more... (R., Ecuador, 44 years old, in Italy for four years)

Even when both partners agree that women should leave first, the very experience of common migration, once the male partner has also left and rejoined his wife, may result either in preserving the earlier relationship or in splitting up. Much depends on men's chances and skills in adjusting to a labour market and on the social context, arguably more difficult for them than their female counterparts. In the medium term, however, it seems that unless a partner reunification takes place (or is expected to), keeping on with a steady conjugal relationship at distance – or *aprender a convivir* ('learning to live together'), as Pribilsky (2004) puts it – will get more and more difficult. This holds particularly true in the case of Ecuadorian women.

Among Ukrainian women, we have found instances of failed reunifications that did not result in a couple's definitive separation. Some partners of the women we interviewed, after joining them in Italy, eventually ended up working in the domestic sector as well, especially when not young and healthy enough to find a job in construction. Such 'women's work', however, could be perceived as demeaning. If unable to find any other job, a man could decide to give up and return home.

My family... what can I say?! I have been married for seven years and I have been in Italy five years! So I spent just two years with my husband. Well, he came to Italy and stayed here with me for two years. I was working as a caregiver for the elderly, right? And he, too, worked as a caregiver. We managed to see each other every day because we both had a two-hour break, from 2 pm to 4 pm. Then my employers gradually got used to letting me go out during the evening as well... we were doing good. But at one moment my husband got tired. He said: 'You stay here, since you have a job, and I go home and care for our [six-year-old] child,' and so he went back home. (O., Ukraine, 29 years old, in Italy for six years)

As for Polish women, female migration can lead to the same multiple transformations in familial arrangements: a marriage preservation, a divorce following migration, a new family life in Italy or some 'intermediate solution'. However, women's migration does not seem to end so often in a couple's separation. The key point is rather the frequency with which a woman can return home, at least in the initial period of migration. Furthermore, her relatives can and do often visit her in Italy. Even before entering the EU, Polish citizens enjoyed special-access status, allowing for frequent mutual visits between family members. As a matter of fact, in our sample no women sponsored their husbands.

Where I accept a job, I immediately explain to the employers that I am married, I love my husband, and that we can't stay apart one year, two years, three years. All these years without a husband I love?!

And, thus, every three or four months I go home to visit him, also for short, maybe just two weeks, but I go. I didn't come to Italy in order to destroy my life, I came in order to help the family, and I don't want to lose my husband. When he tells me, for instance, 'Tomorrow you come back because I can't stand it anymore,' I go back home. (A., Poland, 47 years old, in Italy for eight years)

In the Polish case, commuting migration may even become a way to put a strained marriage to test: the easy reversibility of the migration process prevents it from turning into a definitive break-up. As EU citizens, whose

homeland is not so remote from Italy, Polish migrants can rely on relatively frequent visits to Italy by their children and husband. These relatives usually stay some weeks or, for schoolchildren in the summer, some months. For children, holidays in Italy may be a first step, potentially ending up in a permanent settlement. Our interviews suggest, anyway, that children tend to visit their mothers in Italy much more often than husbands do, arguably because the spouses, as some women put it, are unused to moving. They may even feel that Italy has 'stolen' their wives. Furthermore, the scope for circular migration, the general orientation towards going back for good once migration aims have been reached and the difficulty of migrant men's placement into the Italian labour market are all reasons that discourage Polish married women from sponsoring their husbands.

## **12.6 The other side of transnational family life: remittances and their impact back home**

Transnational circuits of affection and care at a distance also include, and indeed are fuelled, by remittances. Most women we interviewed in all three countries are accustomed to sending home remittances on a regular basis – at least as long as dependent children are left behind and provided they are not temporarily unemployed, considering the precarious domestic labour market. 'That's why we are here,' any of them would contend. Apart from the money flows ordinarily sent back to families, our field-work revealed a few cases in Ecuadorian and Ukrainian immigrant networks of spontaneous, even if sporadic and scarcely organised, collective remittances – that is, fundraising initiatives to benefit communities of origin (Goldring 2004).<sup>11</sup> Apparently, this is not so common for the Polish case.

While in an earlier phase remittances are primarily used to pay back one's debts in the sending country (whether those contracted for leaving or the pre-existing ones that may have led to migration itself), generally speaking, remittances provide one's family daily livelihood. Apart from that, they may cover expenses for housing (buying, reconstructing or furnishing a home), child education, health care, special feasts and events, to support some family member's migration or possibly as a loan to further would-be migrants. Very seldom, however, are moneys put into any productive activities resembling the logic of Goldring (2004)'s investment remittances. This may hold true beyond the empirical cases we studied, where most migrants are women in Italy for only a relatively few years, with low or no experience in communal initiatives.

The amount of the remittances a woman sends back seems to vary according to some key factors. These include the number of people



(especially children) maintained at home, her specific job conditions, mostly in the domain of domestic work (whether in a live-in or a daily arrangement) and even the local area where she is settled in Italy. Once close family members are reunited in Italy, however, remittances tend to rapidly decrease if not altogether cease. Should this happen, exceptions would include spontaneous or episodic presents or donations given on grounds other than the logic of reciprocity informing remittances.

It is difficult to estimate the overall relative proportion of money sent back and thus the prevailing patterns of saving and consumption in the cases we analysed.<sup>12</sup> The ongoing presence of (dependent) children at home, however, seems to be the key variable accounting for the amount and the evolution over time of remittance flows. Apart from that, ethnographic evidence suggests that many Ukrainian women show a peculiarly strong 'ethics of remittances' even several years after leaving. This may induce them – by means of further informal, daily 'menial jobs' – to sacrifice most of their spare time while in Italy. Their consumption in Italy, on the other hand, seems to involve mostly the basic 'toolkit' for transnational family relations: telephone cards to communicate back home. At least within the immigrant profile we studied, rarely was the internet regarded as a viable alternative.

The women's accounts suggest a higher degree of remittance-dependence on the part of those left behind in Ukrainian and Ecuadorian migration, compared with the Polish case. Of crucial relevance here are the diverse life and professional opportunities accessible to the second generations at home. While Poland is now a full member of the EU labour market, emigrant mothers from Ukraine and Ecuador may be forced to keep sending back money even after the end of their children's educational career.

Another significant difference has to do with the channels for sending remittances. Unlike the other groups, Polish women may be in more direct control of the money they remit, thanks to their more frequent journeys back home. Ukrainians must instead send remittances through some intermediary informal Ukrainian-managed agency. A distrust of formal credit institutions is shared both by Ukrainians and Ecuadorians, due to the severe financial crises that helped trigger emigration in their respective countries. For Ecuadorian immigrants, however, utterly informal remittance channels are simply unviable. While grass-roots money transfers still seem more common, most women interviewed were aware of the higher costs involved as compared to banking services. Arguably, banks are gaining increasing relevance the longer immigrants are settling in a locality.

A few remarks need to be made with respect to those receiving remittances. Among our interviewees, while most Polish women reported sending money to their partners back home, Ukrainians tended to focus

directly on the children left behind or, in the case of minors, those taking care of them (mostly grandparents). The same applies to Ecuadorians. Recurrent in women's narratives are complaints about the bad ways in which their husbands supposedly spend the money received from overseas as well as, more generally, the collective myths on 'easy gains' emerging in their communities of origin.

When an actual remittance dependency emerges, immigrant women tend to frame (and stigmatise) it as a sort of exploitation towards their own hard labour. However, they see it as something that cannot by any means be prevented.

The only thing I always suggest to the others is that they should never send all the money home – the whole wage... [it's] better to send a half, and leave the rest in a bank here. I saw many situations where the money you send seems really 'heavensent'. They don't understand, they can't appreciate your valuable support, they don't even realise their mother – step by step, little by little – sends them all her life, her health. And they waste it like that... so keep some money for yourself. (O., Ukraine, 53 years old, in Italy for nine years)

## 12.7 Conclusion

By comparing transnational family life in three women-led migration flows to Italy, we have found that transnational families may be constituted in manifold ways. By focusing on their ways of retaining relations at a distance with partners and children left behind, our comparative analysis has highlighted some common elements. On the one hand, migration is mostly driven by women's responsibility (in economic and moral terms) to their family members at home, with particular respect to children. However, the different age structures in the three groups are related, generally speaking, with divergent age patterns in children left behind. While Ecuadorian women may tend to leave children behind even in their infancy, this is less the case among Ukrainian immigrants who leave mostly as young grandmothers (known as *babuschke*), supporting through remittances even more than one generation in the communities of origin.

Judging from the biographical accounts we analysed, migration may represent a way out of already strained couplehood. Many women, driven by concern for a better future life for their children, leave after a failed marriage or possibly after their partners have left them alone. Given the premise, at least in the cases we studied, female emigration may stem from the necessity to find further income sources on behalf of families that in fact were already often female-headed. As to the evolution of con-

jugal relationships, after the turning point marked by migration, a high differentiation in familial arrangements appears. Reunification (whether in sending or receiving country) and disruption cover the range of end-points, though these circumstances are not the only ones or necessarily the most widespread. Within such a continuum we may focus on some relatively congruent patterns (and on the most frequent factors accounting for them).

The main distinction seems to lie in how migrants' agency – in terms of the aims, expectations and resources moving their initial projects and evolving over time – is able to interact with structural factors. These include the legal frameworks in the receiving countries, the evolving labour demand and the differential impact of geographical distance and its related costs (whether allowing for circular migration or not).

Actually existing transnational couples who maintain conjugal relationships at a distance over time (in contrast to a conventional, proximate, daily interactions-based family view) can be detected to some extent within the Polish case. This has obviously to do with Poles' far easier access to the EU labour market even before the 2004 enlargement. A Polish migrant family may qualify as transnational insofar as it practices a circular migration pattern. This entails easily allowing visits back home and family members' visits to Italy. Moreover, the relative proximity to the sending country and the declining scope of remittances after the end of children's education are two other elements singling out a transnational family pattern in Polish migration flows. Easy mobility between the two countries is perceived by the women as a way to retain their unity over time. Some women even intentionally opt for irregular work (renouncing the advantages accruing from a full legal status), as doing otherwise might limit their autonomy to return home whenever they like. Relatively seldom do Polish women feel the need to reunite with their husbands in Italy. More often than not, they retain a substantive home-return orientation. In their own case, a return perspective, albeit contentious and systematically postponed, relies on a solid basis.

Conjugal disruption as the result of migration seems much more widespread among Ukrainian families. In immigrants' experience, initial expectations for a short emigration process are mostly disappointed, thus contributing to family crisis. This may occur for several potential reasons including lack of a legal status, obstacles to partners' reunification (related to 'adverse selectivity' concerning gender and age in the receiving labour market) and an ongoing dependence on remittances by family members left behind. It is as though Ukrainian women were living in an apnoea-like state, being prevented from planning their own future life. Still, this attitude may reflect a renegotiation, while abroad, of a woman's own private sphere – allowing her to 'think for herself', while still sending remittances – that she could never enjoy in her own country. Many

women's accounts suggest also a perceived, supposed inability to 'resist distance' in one's affective life; hence, the experience of new affective relationships on both sides (albeit mostly involving their partners at home).

As to the Ecuadorian case, our analysis suggests two possible scenarios. The first involves family reunion in the short to medium term. This is facilitated by a relatively low age profile, though men's and children's integration may be less smooth than females' as the first migrants. The second is conjugal disruption, which often reflects pre-existing frailties and inherent tensions in local family arrangements. Comparatively few are instances of transborder conjugal relationships that are kept alive after a few years' separation, without any viable, short-term perspective on a new family arrangement constituted through physical proximity. Most women we interviewed do express, even when relatively 'well integrated' in Italy, a future return expectation. While being a relevant symbolic and identification device, this may turn out to be a poor basis for projecting future life together unless it is somehow substantiated. From this viewpoint, any instrument of communication at a distance – although powerful for keeping in touch and even influencing social life back home – is likely to be inadequate in terms of affective relationships.

In the domain of conjugal relationships, transnational family life shows an extremely diverse pattern both in scope and intensity. Yet in the field of intergenerational relationships, the overall picture reveals far more common traits. The label 'transnational family' can be usefully deployed to the extent that parents – increasingly, mothers – in immigration do provide and in many respects care for children left at home in supposedly temporary (but often longer-than-expected) terms. In the realm of conjugal relationships, on the other hand, the notion concerns a multifaceted set of familial arrangements that is vague and indeterminate, unless empirically specified. Summing up, in response to our beginning question, transnational families may indeed be framed under one pattern that involves general traits, at least regarding intergenerational relationships. And they may be framed under many different patterns, according to the migration flow and with some diversity found within every single case concerning the evolution of conjugal relationships at a distance.

## Notes

- 1 The chapter is the result of its authors' collective effort. Nevertheless, sections 12.2, 12.4 and 12.5.2 should be attributed to Ludovica Banfi and sections 12.3, 12.5.1 and 12.5.3 to Paolo Boccagni. The introduction and conclusion were co-written by the authors.

- 2 Seven hundred biographical narrative interviews with female and male migrants, working as caregivers, nannies and houseworkers, were collected all over the country. They were contacted by snowball sampling (which also accounts also for some key sociodemographic variables). Of those interviewed, 60 were from Poland and 70 from Ukraine (Banfi 2008).
- 3 The qualitative field-work source involved some 35 in-depth interviews of Ecuadorian immigrants in Italy and 23 of their relatives in the local Ecuadorian sending community (Boccagni 2009). The survey resulted in 432 questionnaires simultaneously collected in Milan, Genoa and Rome (Boccagni 2007).
- 4 Among the many theoretical contributions underlying this approach, some key texts are the following: Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt (1999), Faist (2000), Kivisto (2001), Levitt (2001), Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) and Vertovec (2004). In a gender perspective, see also Gamburd (2000), Salih (2003), Pessar and Mahler (2003) and Sorensen (2005). On transnational family life, see inter alia, Ambrosini (2008) and Boccagni (2010).
- 5 But most of these migrants are working in relatively low-skilled jobs: the top three occupations of Eastern European workers registered in the Worker Registration Scheme during May 2004 – June 2006 were process operatives, warehouse operatives and packers (Ruhs 2006).
- 6 Regularisation figures for 2002 show that 84 per cent of Ukrainian women and 54 per cent of Polish women work as houseworkers, elderly caregivers and babysitters (De Marco 2004). Polish women thus seem to have been more successful in accessing other occupational sectors. Ecuadorian workers, especially the women among them, generally have a role that could also be framed in 'niche' terms, as suggested by Gratton (2007) with respect to their distribution in the Spanish labour market. In Italy, data gathered on a non-representative national sample of over 400 Ecuadorian workers indicate dramatic gender differences: for women, domestic work (including home help, residential or daily carework and baby-sitting) covers nearly 66 per cent of the sample; for men, factory (40 per cent) and construction jobs (13 per cent) prevail, with a less striking niche effect than their female counterparts (Boccagni 2007).
- 7 See e.g. Andall (2000) and Parreñas (2001).
- 8 The same commonality does not apply, however, to processes of family reunification, which over the last years has had a somewhat greater impact on inflows from Ecuador (at least as far as children are concerned) and possibly also Ukraine, though being much less relevant for Poland. This basically has to do with the different age structures (hence, generationally different migration projects) detected among the three groups (ISTAT 2007).
- 9 Although buying a house may be regarded as a response to a basic need, it is also a matter of social status and emulation. In Ukraine, Ecuador and many traditional emigration countries, some areas – especially along the countryside – are dotted with luxurious houses (at least as their facades would suggest) that mimic prestigious architectural styles in the immigration country, if not the very features of an employer's house.
- 10 The average age of Ukrainian women in our sample was approximately 40, while Ecuadorians were far younger. In the Ukrainian case, it seems that the babushka ('grandmother') is expected to make sacrifices for the well-being of her adult children and grandchildren. This selective process is legitimised – in our female interviewees' words – by the greater risk for divorce faced by a young married couple forced to live apart from each other.

- 11 In the case of Ukraine, collective remittances are the more widespread practice, with money being sent to individuals and groups to build churches in what seems to be a religious revival. At the time of the 2004 elections, we also found instances of people financing pro-Yushchenko political upheavals. As to Ecuadorians, we documented a few local solidarity initiatives that were promoted spontaneously by single groups or individual migrants; they involved money or aid transfers to deprived people, were meant to promote community projects or funded feasts, public works, church-buildings, sports events, etc. Generally speaking, such initiatives combined aims for creating solidarity with status-related reputation maintenance.
- 12 With respect to Ecuadorian immigrants, the aforementioned national pilot survey (Boccagni 2007) reports that some 30 per cent of adult women remit more than €300 a month and a further 21 per cent remit between €150 and €300 a month. In the case of people with children left behind, the €300+ rate rises to 54 per cent. Overall, those remitting money on a monthly basis amount to two out of every three interviewees, with insignificant gender differences. Ukrainian and Polish immigrants are characterised by lower rates of family reunification, as a result of their age structure (at least as far as children are concerned; see ISTAT 2007). Polish women with children left behind seem to send home between €300 and €400 a month, usually bringing or sending the money every three to four months. Most Ukrainian women with children left behind seem to remit between €400 and €600 a month.

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## 13 Civic stratification, stratified reproduction and family solidarity: Strategies of Latino families in Milan

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### 13.1 Introduction

Despite a strong discourse of closure that progressively spread across all European Union countries from the 1970s onward, migration in Europe still persists in a variety of forms. Migrants comprise the professional and technical elite, families, asylum seekers, seasonal workers, undocumented persons and EU and non-EU citizens. This range reflects a stratification of statuses and belongings, a system that Morris (2000), following Lockwood, calls civic stratification: a structure of inequalities of access to the freedom of movement and rights that represents the prevalent modality of managing migration in European countries. The process of assigning different sets of rights to people with respect to their status (long-term resident, national or European citizen, family migrant, guest worker...) generates a complex scenario of partial inclusions together with – and despite – statements and proposals for equal treatment. A selective conceding of rights qualifies as a kind of governance; both surveillance and control are gained through building these ‘internal frontiers’, which become increasingly strategic as the ‘external’ ones – namely, border controls – tend to manifest weakness. This system aims to reconcile contradictory tensions: the will to open borders and create more inclusive patterns, both for economic and demographic reasons and as a consequence of ‘embedded liberalism’, clashes with the safety sphere in terms of social security and social order.<sup>1</sup> A pivotal role is the one played by family reunification policies, the right to which, I will show in this chapter, becomes conditional and stratified. Nationality as well as social and economical resources are laid down as conditions for access in national policies to limit the risk of an uncontrolled, unselected growth of migration flows.

The objective of this chapter is to highlight the multi-layered borders Latin American immigrants face during the process of family separation and reunification in their migration to Italy. I will focus on the forces that jeopardise migrants’ capabilities to reproduce their families, while demonstrating the resources of social capital they bring into play to limit the costs that family separation entails. I seek to take the immigrants’ own agency into account,<sup>2</sup> yet at the same time not remain blind to the strong,

persistent dynamics of discrimination affecting them, since these hinder and concretely stratify their right to family life. Linking the concepts of civic stratification (Morris 2002) and stratified reproduction (Colen 1995), I aim to show how immigration policies and labour market segmentation serve as bonds tending to leave little room for migrants' action. In line with critics of the macro-structuralist approach, I also attempt to capture the dynamic interplay of structure, culture and agency in immigrants' strategies and behaviour (Ambrosini 2005; Foner 1997).

### **13.2 Migrant and minority ethnic families: Addressing culture, structure and agency**

International literature has often referred to two main paradigms to understand the livelihood of migrant and ethnic minority families: structuralist frameworks, characterised by an emphasis on the stratification processes going on across society (as well as in the world order), and culturalist approaches, which are more attentive to the ethnic identity formation and acculturation processes. These, as I will show, are quite distinctive ways to account for social difference and change.

Culturalists tend to impute the ethnic specificity of family behaviours (such as marriage rate, cohabitations and divorces, fertility rates, parenting and courtship styles, gender and age roles) to inherited cultural traits, partly or entirely reproduced in the new environment after migration. At the same time, they tend to read changes in intimate relationships as the outcome of acculturation processes, namely, as the effect of immigrants' assimilation into a new society's values and lifestyles.

By contrast, structuralists tend to view family differences as the outcome of broader processes of stratification taking place at the macro-level (generally, as consequences of political or economic forces), and emerging family behaviours as more or less successful adaptations to a historically changing environment. Structuralist approaches (Baca Zinn 1990; Coles 2005; Glenn 1983; Staples & Mirande 1980) initially arose as a critical reaction to the mainstream literature dominating the debate in the 1970s. Particularly aware of the effects of the racial hierarchy, they denounced culturalist approaches that traced the root of social failure and marginality to the cultural traditions of ethnic minority groups.<sup>3</sup> Instead, these authors proposed a positive evaluation of such features,<sup>4</sup> seeing them as the only possible adaptation to an often hostile, tough environment.<sup>5</sup> These critical works showed historical and geographical variations in ethnic families' lifestyles;<sup>6</sup> at the same time, they revealed how some social traits in family life are cross-sectional among groups, since they can be imputed to factors such as class position or time of settlement. The merit of these studies has undoubtedly been to show the ideological and

misleading character of certain approaches, but they also reveal a certain explanatory weakness. For instance, such approaches fail to explain the persistence of inherited values and behaviours that continue to manifest themselves even if economically inefficient,<sup>7</sup> as well as why different minority groups or individuals in similar socio-economic positions display contrasting behaviours. More broadly, they tend to underestimate identity values and ethnic identification processes lying behind group formation, driving human agency and enforcing (and constraining) migrants' capacity for action.

I am thus prompted by a twofold objective. On the one hand, I wish to take advantage of some structuralist intuitions, namely, attention paid to the stratification processes. Because of the peculiarity of the research context (European, not North American), I will further develop the structure of constraints model, linking together Morris' (2002) findings about civic stratification to Colen's (1995) notion of stratified reproduction. In this way, I will improve the notion of civic stratification with a stronger emphasis on demographic and family behaviours, and integrate stratified reproduction with a focus on immigration policies. On the other hand, following Foner's (1997) idea of a dynamic interplay of structure, culture and agency, I hope to highlight the way immigrants react to these boundaries.

### 13.2.1 *Managing migration: Civic stratification and the selective access to rights*

As prior suggested, the right to family reunification is enjoyed only under certain conditions and in radically different ways depending on the nationality, status and economic resources available to the applicant. Third-country nationals (TCNs) and European citizens are subject to different laws regarding their entry and permanence in Italy, and they are consequently subject to a different set of rules in respect to family reunification and social rights.<sup>8</sup> The levels of growing restrictiveness can be assessed by taking a comparative look at the following dimensions: the characteristics of who can apply for family reunification, the necessary requirements, the number and classification of rejoinable relatives, the status relatives get and the regularisation opportunities (as well as the chances to obtain a more favourable status) offered by family ties.

The Bossi-Fini law regulates the permanent residence of TCNs in Italy by linking their kind of job contract to the kind and length of their stay permit.<sup>9</sup> After six years of regular residence, if they earn a sufficient income and hold a renewable permit, they can apply for the permanent resident card, known as the Carta di Soggiorno, which also applies to dependent relatives (spouses and minor children). TCNs' main legal way of entry is found in yearly quotas and family reunification: in 2009, 136,332

persons entered the country as dependent workers, while 107,410 entered for purposes of family reunification.<sup>10</sup> European citizens staying for periods up to three months are not subject to any formality. Subsequently, they are expected to show they earn sufficient income to be registered at the municipality register offices and obtain their residence. European citizens' family reunification can be seen as an extension of their mobility rights: since EU citizens are allowed to enter, work and travel back and forth, so are their family members. This may transpire in slightly different ways, depending on whether the relative is also European or a TCN. In any case, their reunification is easier than in the case of a TCN trying to reunite with another TCN. In the same way, being (or becoming) the relative of an Italian citizen offers more naturalisation and regularisation options than being an EU citizen's or a TCN's relative. Finally, especially vulnerable subjects, such as minors and pregnant women, can both gain and provide long- or short-term forms of protection.

Among TCNs, only the holders of a one-year (or longer) residence permit can apply for family reunification. This means that it is not only the undocumented, but also seasonal workers who do not enjoy this right. Thereafter, TCNs must start a very complicated, long and demanding procedure (that involves the police headquarters, known as the *Questura*, embassies, consulates and municipalities). They must prove they are living in a home large enough to accommodate a certain number of people holding a regular contract and that they earn enough money, the amount contingent on how many relatives they wish to bring. They must also translate and authenticate several certificates attesting their family ties. The law strictly specifies who the rejoinable relatives are: the (not legally divorced) spouse, minor children (of the sponsor and the spouse) contingent to the other natural parent's permission, adult children with a proven disability who are unable to sustain themselves and elderly parents if it is proven they lack adequate support in their country of origin.

Once in Italy, relatives receive a family permit allowing them to work, which is valid for as long as is the applicant's permit is. In the case of divorce or separation, the family permit may be converted into a work permit (this also happens to the minor's permit when coming of age). Chances of regularisation via family ties are few for TCNs: for instance, in the case of a married couple in which one TCN is undocumented, the only chance for the undocumented partner is to return to the country of origin – yet doing so implies the risk of being caught and expelled at the border – and to wait out the family reunification procedure. European citizens can reunite with family members as soon as they want. If working, they are not expected to show any proof of housing or income, nor do they need any visas for their European relatives. The definition of 'family ties' for the purpose of reunification could seem pointless in the case of an EU-EU family tie, since relatives themselves are entitled to freedom of circu-

lation. It does, however, become worthy of attention in the case of an EU-TCN family tie. EU family members are specified as the spouse; children under age 21 or older if still economically dependent on the European citizen; and economically dependent parents.<sup>11</sup> Parents and children of the TCN's spouse are also accepted under the same conditions. While EU relatives need only register at the municipality, a TCN relative must request the Questura for a residence permit for EU citizen family members, which is valid for five years, after which the relative acquires the right to permanent residence.

The proven degree of relationship with an Italian citizen determines for the foreign citizen (both EU and TCN) better treatment in the legal system, since the Italian citizen's constitutional right to the family unit then counts. This right is to be found in full application of the Unifying Text on Immigration when it guarantees a residence permit to the foreign parent of an Italian minor<sup>12</sup> (art. 30) or when it establishes that the foreigner staying illegally in Italy cannot be expelled if he or she is the first- or second-degree relative of an Italian.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, marriage to an Italian citizen is the easiest way to naturalise, since Italian law is otherwise quite restrictive (TCNs need ten years of legal residence; EU citizens need just four). However, since the so-called 'security decree' issued in 2009, regularisation opportunities via marrying an Italian have shrunk; undocumented people are no longer allowed to marry in the country.

The following section will show that immigrants are not the passive victims of this multilayered system of constraints regulating their intimate lives. Instead, through the construction of family, friendship and, more broadly, supportive relational ties (with both Italian and immigrant citizens), many manage to reunite their families after shorter or longer separations that may nonetheless negatively impact their intergenerational and conjugal ties.

### 13.2.2 *Gender, ethnicity, race, class and the access to reproductive and care rights: The concept of stratified reproduction*

Colen (1995) coined the term 'stratified reproduction' to describe the power relations through which some categories of people gain greater support while others face greater obstacles and hardships regarding reproduction and care. In light of this, it is possible to identify different regimes of inequality with regard to the way care and social reproduction are socially distributed, represented, sustained and sanctioned throughout the world. In Colen's view, various institutions<sup>14</sup> contribute to the legitimisation (or marginalisation) of specific living arrangements and family styles, so that some become dominant while others are stigmatised for being deviant. At the same time, some people possess, while others lack, the means to practise and control reproductive activities.<sup>15</sup> In her study of

paid Dominican care workers in New York, Colen describes the socio-economic challenges (low wages, long working hours, lack of maternity leave and affordable high-quality care for their own children) and political constraints (immigration policies) that force West Indian workers to arrange their reproductive activities transnationally. In this way, biological and social reproduction, as well as socialisation and care (in terms of resources and burdens, rights, duties and responsibilities) are carried out according to hierarchies of gender, class, race and ethnicity in a global context. Because of the different distribution of resources and expectations in the social system, reproductive work is experienced and perceived in different ways by women and men, the young and old, wealthy and poor as well as ethnic minorities and majorities.

Hochschild and Ehrenreich (2003) have also focused on the way care is affected by global inequalities, showing the interconnections between local contexts and processes (for instance, demographic and economic changes) and global phenomena (composition and direction of migration flows). This insight is quite relevant, since in Italy, as in other Southern European countries, female migration flows have been established because of a growing demand for domestic and caring labour (see also Banfi & Boccagni this volume). This demand arises from demographic and economic changes – the whole population getting older, the growing number of women working full time, etc. Another cause concerns the features of the welfare state, which has been defined as ‘familial’ just because it is characterised by a lack of investment in care services and a huge amount of care is still carried out by family members, mainly women. Ehrenreich and Hochschild show that many families in the world are increasingly dependent on immigrant women’s labour, women who are forced to leave their own dependent relatives abroad, in the care of other persons (generally female relatives, but also paid women and sometimes husbands), generating what has been called a ‘care chain’. This concept highlights processes involving a significant number of households in the world, but it doesn’t take into account several relevant aspects actually diversifying the shape and extent of care chains, as well as their evolution in time (see also Evergeti & Ryan this volume). The evolution of care chains is not just due to the life cycle’s shifting regimes of dependency, but also because women often try to relocate their family ties abroad, to put an end to the transnational family living, something often hard to sustain in the long run. The timelines and challenges marking this process are manifold, presumably different between countries and contingent on various factors. Such factors include migration policies (family reunification provisions, visa policies, naturalisation policies, characteristics and frequency of amnesties, etc.), the social rights immigrants have access to (health care, educational and care facilities, housing, etc.), family structure (couples or single parents, number of children, etc.). They also depend on



the way immigrants manage to build family and interpersonal relationships allowing them to cross the civic stratification hierarchy, as well as to reach more favourable positions in the labour or housing market (giving and receiving hospitality, subcontracting, sharing mortgages, etc.).

It is here that stratified reproduction proves useful. This concept allows a charting of the strategies available to immigrant families, while also identifying differences among immigrants themselves. From there it is possible to identify constraints accounting for the genesis of new family forms, such as transnational families, as well as to allow the emergence of ways to solve problems, such as the work-family balance. I argue here that the system of civic stratification and stratified reproduction generally leaves little room for migrants' agency. It sometimes puts at risk the strength of their family ties due to forms of 'forced transnationalism',<sup>16</sup> discrimination in the field of social rights, work-family balances that are quite hard to solve as well as ethnic and gender segregation in disadvantaged forms of employment (in terms of salary and schedules).

This analysis is applied to a study of Latin American family migration in the next section.

### 13.3 Latin American families

Latin American families are a group characterised by high rates of female participation in the labour market, thereby warranting investigation into the hardships of the work-family balance. Latin American migration flows in Lombardy, Italy, mainly comprise Ecuadoreans, Peruvians, Brazilians, Salvadorians, Dominicans and Bolivians. These populations constitute a relatively recent flow<sup>17</sup> (granted there are differences among them, for instance, Peruvians arrived a little earlier than the others), which have recently started to show significant rates of family migration.<sup>18</sup> Mainly of urban origins themselves and holding medium-to-high degrees of education, they are largely concentrated in cities such as Milan, Genoa and Rome, where they are also characterised by fairly high rates of being undocumented (Ambrosini & Palmas 2005; Lagomarsino 2006). The population in Lombardy includes quite a high level of separated and divorced people, especially among women. Available data on stay permits show that 4 per cent of women (compared to 1 per cent of men) coming from Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Peru are separated, divorced or widowed.<sup>19</sup> Women are highly segregated in the care and domestic sector: according to a representative survey carried out in the Lombardy region (ISMU 2008), 68.3 per cent of Ecuadorean and 74.4 per cent of Peruvian women are employed in cleaning, domestic or care work. Compared to the female immigrant population as a whole, they are less often housewives (8.8 per cent of Ecuadorean and 5.2 per cent of Peruvian

compared to 17.9 per cent of all immigrant women) or part-timers (respectively, 12.4 per cent and 8.8 per cent compared to 33.8 per cent) and show lower unemployment rates. Men appear to be less represented in typically 'manly' niches of the labour market, rather trailing in 'feminised' occupations. Just 11 per cent of Peruvian and Ecuadorean men are employed as construction workers, compared to 22.5 per cent of all immigrant males. Meanwhile, 11.1 per cent of Ecuadorean males and 19.2 per cent of Peruvian males, compared to 5.9 per cent of all immigrant men, are employed in the cleaning, domestic or care sector.

My sample is mostly composed of Ecuadoreans and Peruvians, though I decided to include some Dominicans, Venezuelans and Colombians to check the effects of nationality on family reunification dynamics. Actually, this is quite a relevant dimension, since for some (such as Ecuadoreans, Colombians and Bolivians), it was easier for them to enter Italy due to not needing – until recently – a tourist visa. It is therefore evident how this can be seen as a further form of civic stratification. While there are differences between and within the groups, certain factors led focus more on the similarities Latin Americans share rather than on their differences. Sex ratio, occupational typology, urban origin and destination, language spoken and religious affiliation, for instance, are comparable among these groups.

The 45 interviews were conducted with married or cohabiting couples (nine couples, eighteen interviews) with children aged five to 23, single parents (seven interviews) and teens (twelve interviews, ages fourteen to nineteen). Some were also conducted with social workers in the City of Milan (three) and NGOs (three), as well as with a Peruvian cultural mediator and the spokesperson of an Ecuadorian association. Interviews, initially in-depth, and subsequently semi-structured, touched upon several aspects and issues of immigrants' migratory history and were generally conducted in the interviewee's place of residence, with the exception of children who preferred to be interviewed in public places such as cafes or parks. The next section discusses migrants' experiences with different immigration statuses and processes of reunification.

### 13.4 Difficulties of family reunification

In order to reunite their families, the first difficulty immigrants must overcome is being regularised. In my sample it took, on average, three years. However, I met people who, having arrived just before a *sanatoria* (as regularisation programmes are called), managed to obtain a resident permit in just one year, as well as people who, having missed the latest *sanatoria* (due to being unable to find an employer willing to hire them legally), had to wait several years for the next one. Therefore, housing and

work – in terms of lacking both income and time to pursue them – can become a problem, especially for the many single mothers I met. Women generally start working as live-in maids or care workers, subsequently having to find a regular hourly paying job and a home that is big enough to fulfil legal requirements and offers a regular rent contract. Finally, one should not underestimate all the time and the efforts needed to provide the requisite documentation (birth and marriage certificates, municipality papers certifying their home's adequacy, income certification, etc.). This documentation must be collected from, and delivered to, several generally overworked and crowded offices both in Italy and the home country.

Family reunification processes are so tricky and complicated that, even if initiated by sole individuals, they are generally the outcome of collective efforts. It is through the solidarity and mutual help enabled by their social ties that immigrants manage, in the end, to reunite their families (Bonizzoni 2009). Transnational family ties are essential aids in collecting necessary documentation in the country of origin, fixing appointments at embassies and consulates and having certificates translated. In addition, local family ties are extremely helpful. For instance, a Dominican woman interviewed named Lina managed to reunite with her son thanks to the help of her own mother. Her mother declared to officers that the child was going to reside in her own home, since Lina was living in a flat without a regular rent contract. Also, Italian families, generally the ones immigrant mothers work for, can sometimes be of some help. Some Italian families are moved to compassion when they become aware of their employee's sad family history. Some offer their house 'on paper' to help the employee obtain from the immigration offices the right to bring her family in, though others have even hosted the worker's relatives in their own home. Through displays of their grief, some women have obtained considerable help from their employers, even if this 'supportive' relationship should be critically problematised, given the unbalanced power relationship characterising it.<sup>20</sup>

The legal, also known as *de jure*, family reunification procedure can become so long, expensive and complicated that many who were able to do so joined their families 'illegally' and stayed in the country (Ecuadorians, Colombians and Bolivians could, until recently, enter Italy as tourists without a visa). *De facto* family reunification entails several advantages, but also implies certain risks, which people are generally unaware of and painfully discover after they have migrated. Among the positive aspects, I should mention the advantages that follow from having faced the migration as a family unit. Coming as a whole family means avoiding the pains and uncertainties that come with separation and, moreover, having to choose which members to bring, including parts of the family (such as minor children, sisters and brothers) who are not allowed to migrate le-

gally. Subsequent difficulties are, at any rate, notable: when everyone is undocumented, fundamental needs, such as a home and a job, can cause distress for families. Some experiences can become real emergencies when shared with dependent family members. Examples include the situation of *posto letto*, sharing a home with many strangers, something the majority of migrants do due to lack of money and the documents necessary to rent their own place, and job-related uncertainties such as when work will be found, how much – or if – it will pay, how many hours in a day can one work. Living with strangers is sometimes perceived as a risk for children; many of the parents I met generally did not trust leaving children at home in their absence, which means that even work-oriented women often stay at home or work just a few hours, thus prolonging the family's economic difficulties. Moving to a new home, a normal occurrence in the first phases of a typical migrant life, can be a source of stress for children, since they could be forced to change schools frequently within a period of initial adjustment that is already troublesome enough for most. Hence, care needs can be pressing for families with preschool-aged children since, on one hand, women are the ones finding jobs more easily; on the other, because it is not possible to enrol undocumented children in public nurseries, and private care services are too expensive. Immigrants are often also deprived of their grandparents, a fundamental resource for Italian families, since non-working parents are extremely difficult to re-join. In Italy, where public care services are scarce and families are used to relying on relatives or private care services (often provided by these same immigrant mothers), conciliation can become extremely difficult to perform, even more so for immigrant women.

Living undocumented entails risks that are better faced with the help of family members, a support network that proves extremely useful for gathering and exchanging information about housing, jobs, regularisation 'tricks' and procedures. In this regard, family relations are a powerful means of social and economic integration, since they can 'mediate' undocumented immigrants' access to resources and social rights (job, housing, care, etc.) from which otherwise they would be excluded. The history of Pedro and Milagros (29- and 31-year-old Ecuadoreans in Italy for four years) exemplifies how the support provided by relatives can help solve most of the problems undocumented immigrants commonly face. Having to decide between migrating to Spain (where Pedro's family of origin had moved) or to Italy (where Milagros' brother and mother are living), the couple moved to Italy. While his relatives advised against migrating with a child, her mother offered to help them. As such, husband, wife and daughter migrated together, entering Italy as tourists. Regularly residing in Italy for over eight years, Milagros' mother helped both her daughter and son-in-law find informal jobs in the cleaning sector, where she was working as well. She subsequently rented a house where, at the

time of the interview, they were living together. Mother, father and grandmother coordinated their schedules to provide care for the eight-year-old daughter. Following the example of others she knew, Milagros' mother suggested her daughter try a regularisation procedure through the juvenile court. Two years later, Milagros and her daughter were regularised (art. 31 of the Unified Text of Law).

Of course, not everyone I met could rely on such generous relatives. Moreover, for Dominicans and Peruvians entering illegally meant spending money on the risky clandestine entry (some Peruvians spoke of US\$ 5,000 for one fake document), since they required tourist visas to enter.<sup>21</sup> For them, the only option was waiting to meet all the requirements of the legal family reunification procedure. For the women who managed to marry or have a baby with an Italian citizen, things went more smoothly: they could bring their children, even if older than eighteen, without showing any income or housing requirements. They could also find a way to regularise other relatives not belonging to the nuclear family. As such, some families were internally composed of different statuses and citizenships: i.e. Italian citizens (due to mixed marriages and births) and TCNs holding long- and short-term stay permits. This reveals how civic stratification can be traced among individuals, but also within families.

When separation persists, families enact a range of practices and rituals aimed towards the maintenance of long-distance intimacy (Pleck 2002; Gardner & Grillo 2002). Phone and video calls, letters, visits (if they are documented), delegated and collective shared care (if they have children or dependent parents in the country of origin), remittances and gift exchanges: these are the means through which family members keep themselves connected and in relation, mutually sustaining and resisting the emotional costs that distance implies (Horst 2006; Parreñas 2005; Salih 2002; Silvey 2006; Sutton 2004; Wilding 2006). However, as already highlighted, many factors intervene in making transnational caregiving more or less difficult: for instance, the age of the children and the length of the separation play a very significant role (Bonizzoni *forthcoming*). The extent to which children can effectively engage in long-distance communications depends heavily on their age: very young children hardly understand what is going on around them, and it is difficult for mothers to explain where she has gone and why, when she will come back or leave, and so on. After a long separation, communications can become a sort of routine and, in the long run, it is normal for children to become attached to their substitute caretakers (grandmother, aunts, etc.), relativising the importance of their mothers. A good level of coordination between children, mothers and substitute caregivers is also needed to manage transnational care relationships (especially when the children are young and dependent): however, family conflicts (especially conjugal conflicts,

which are not rare in female migration, as mentioned by Banfi and Boccagni in the previous chapter) can threaten this balance. Family life is also sometimes punctuated by unexpected events, such as illnesses, births and deaths, which demand immediate responses and adjustments, a fact that poorly reconciles with the long durations required by the legal procedure (for instance, the death of the caregiver can seriously jeopardise transnational family life). The limits of transnational family life compel these families to relocate their families abroad: however, even family reunification represents a sometimes unexpected challenge.

The reunification process presents a highly sensitive phase in the family life cycle, as the following section will illustrate. Prolonged separations can heighten family tensions, and the feeling of reciprocal estrangement sometimes experienced by relatives does not facilitate the already complicated adjustments children and partners in Italy must undergo.

### 13.5 Joys and pains of recovered unity

For couples, parents and children, living together again is a moment that is certainly as hard-fought as it is longed for. Unfortunately, a new life in Italy does not come without risks and troubles. First, the kind of job migrants generally have makes balancing work and family time quite difficult: broken shifts (such as in hourly cleaning jobs), night shifts (in factories and nursing homes), spending holidays and vacations with the families one works for (as baby-sitters or domestics do), let alone the 'day and night' job of live-in elderly care workers make migrants' family lives a real challenge – sometimes a dangerous masterpiece of a juggling act. Not all the women interviewed managed easily to switch from live-in to live-out jobs, and not all their employers helped them in reconciling work and family. For instance, Fanny, a separated 32-year-old Ecuadorean mother in Italy for five years, decided to bring two of her four children to Italy after three years of separation. She knew the authorities would imminently introduce the tourist visa for Ecuadoreans and, since her children were reaching adulthood (at ages sixteen and seventeen), Fanny was aware of having no chance to try the legal procedure for them. She decided to bring them even though she was still a live-in worker. Once in Italy, the children first lived with Daniel, her new partner whom she met a year before though a complete stranger to them, and for a year they could only see their mother on Sunday and Thursday afternoons. At the time of the interview, they were living in a small two-bedroom house that they were trying to buy together. However, until the two older children, who are still financially dependent, earn a sufficient income to leave home, Fanny will be unable to sponsor the migration of her other two children.

Conjugal relationships can also be made stressful by separation and

reunification processes. Even if the length of the separation between partners is generally shorter than the one between parents and children (because couples often prefer leaving together to improve their living conditions in a shorter time), many couples deeply fear betrayal and abandonment. Many are the narratives of infidelity and couples broken up not just during the separation, but also after having reunited. Life in Italy is challenging for many men: the labour market offers more opportunities to women and work-related regularisation channels have recently become more open to domestic and care workers. Though, from 2005 onwards, the government reserved significant migration quotas for domestic and care workers,<sup>22</sup> they proved insufficient to cover actual needs – a fact that led to September 2009's regularisation addressed specifically to these kinds of workers.<sup>23</sup> Networks driving migration from Latin America often comprise women; men may face difficulties 'colonising' more remunerative and, for that matter, 'manly' jobs due to the relevant role that networks play in mediating labour offers and demands. As a consequence, several Latin American men are employed in the feminised – and underpaid – domestic and cleaning sector, where they are unable to earn a family wage.

Women are strongly pushed into work, both by poor salaries and the relative ease at finding jobs; for couples, it generally means shifting their schedules in order to share personal care and domestic work more equally. If some of the men interviewed showed they accept, or even appreciate, their new family responsibility, and thus refuse the label of 'macho', others expressed more ambivalent views on this matter. In this vein, cultural orientations, which seemed to differ among the Latin American immigrant population, can lead to very different outcomes. I met more than one couple who still adhere to a more or less traditional gender contract, i.e. the woman being a housewife or just working part time. In these cases, structural constraints, such as the lack of care services, combined with personal orientations to reinforce a traditional gender balance. This, nonetheless, proved quite risky in the Italian context, both in terms of poverty and because the main breadwinner's job less risks throwing the whole family into irregularity.

Conjugal relations may also get reworked. One reason for this is that women tend to behave more freely in an environment where actions that would be disapproved of in their home countries (such as independently hanging out at night with friends) are not stigmatised. They are simply practised in an immigration context where social control on their behaviour outside the home is weaker. At the same time, mainstream society condemns some family behaviour that may be tolerated in their home countries, for instance, domestic violence. Women can also rely on relational resources (e.g. networks) and economic ones (e.g. income), allowing them to live independently if they want to.

Single mothers are forced to work full time, as do Italian single mothers, though without relying on non-working parents to look after their children or always having access to affordable care services. What these women generally do is start horizontal solidarity relationships with sisters and friends, as well as ask their children to take care of themselves early on. It is noticeable how the same concept of 'independent-adult children' is a cultural construction mediated by structural constraints. Many women had to send their children off to school alone at the early age of ten, and many children spend numerous hours alone at home, or are taken to the mother's job. Work and family conciliation is thus easier when children are relatively mature and independent and when they can be enrolled in compulsory schooling. The school system offers relatively long minding coverage (many schools provide after-school programmes until 6 pm), which is also open to undocumented children. However, the younger the children, the more difficult conciliation becomes. Two mothers I interviewed transnationally cared for their children who were born in Italy, but sent back to relatives in Latin America until they become old enough to take care of themselves, or at least to be enrolled in school.

We must also consider the relational troubles that can sometimes follow from the loss of intimacy with children due to long separations, as many studies have shown (Artico 2003; Suarez Orozco 2001; Queirolo Palmas & Torre 2005). This can become a serious challenge. Cases of angry children are not rare. Especially when very young, they often find it hard to understand their parents' choices. Moreover, they pass from a situation of relative leisure, a middle-class status in the country of origin – fed by decent salaries and spoiled by the people who take care of them and are hard to leave behind – to a situation in which life is generally hard. They experience a lowering of their class position and often have to take on, for the first time, tasks such as household chores, caring for siblings and economic responsibilities. Some parents draw on their ethnic identity to legitimate educational styles that are generally perceived as 'different' from native ones. In this case, the need to discipline children – making them more 'respectful' and less 'spoilt' than their Italian peers – goes hand in hand with a system of constraints leaving little room for the consumerist behaviour typical of Italian teens. All this happens in a new neighbourhood, school and peer environment, in a new house with 'new' parents and sometimes with new, unknown relatives.

Doris and Maria, sixteen- and seventeen-year-old Ecuadorean sisters in Italy for four years, told me that when they arrived, they did not feel at ease with their mother. Even though they fell in love with their baby step-sister as soon as they saw her at the airport, when they first became aware of her birth and their mother's new partner, they became jealous and angry. Their lack of intimacy with her, as well as fears of being left to fade into the background, initiated a period marked by troubles and misunder-



standings. The two sisters reacted by becoming more and more attached to each other and marginalising their mother who, in turn, began to feel excluded and frustrated, as if her children could not understand the effort she made to have them with her. Their mother, Lucy, a 35-year-old Ecuadorean who has been in Italy for nine years, tells me that if she had to do it over again, she would never separate from them. Even though she knows she had no choice at the time, a number of hardships were overcome only after many years of sufferings. Doris and Maria do not blame their mother for her choices; they now recognise how hard their mother's life has been (and still is), and they are aware of all the efforts she is making. They now admit that living far apart made it difficult to understand each other, especially as children who can barely understand what's going on around them.

### 13.6 Conclusion

These collected histories reveal how immigrant family life is disciplined by a system of political controls bound to strict economic requirements that impact the geographical location of their intimate relationships. Several families are forced to live transnationally for longer than expected, and the balance of productive and reproductive work may be difficult to manage both at local and transnational levels.

Families follow different strategies to overcome this system of constraints. They can try to challenge immigration rules by reunifying relatives illegally and facing, as a consequence, poor standards of living, welfare exclusion and the risk of expulsion; or they can try (often through the help of relatives) to gather necessary resources to apply for legal family reunification routes, albeit experiencing prolonged separations that complicate the management of transnational care arrangements and the experience of reunification abroad. In order to overcome this system of constraints, immigrants take advantage of their local and transnational networks, often made up of extended family ties. Through them, they endeavour to provide care at a distance as well as relocate their family ties abroad. Nevertheless, the civic stratification process intersects in multiple ways with these strategies.

Some families I met, especially those from countries not requiring a visa to enter as a tourist, could venture into informal reunification strategies. These shortened or nullified interpersonal separation, although they were counterbalanced by a more difficult integration experience (due to the irregular status of their relatives). Others, through the establishment of family ties (births, marriages) with Italian citizens could experience more profitable positions. This came in terms of their juridical status and the easier paths they could follow in reunifying relatives. Civic

stratification impacts immigrants' strategies indeed, but it is noteworthy that this is also reflected in the internal composition of families, in which TCNs, Italian citizens and undocumented persons as well as short- and long-term sojourners often coexist.

Latin American immigrants' position on the labour market in Italy is often weak. On the whole, it is easier for women to find jobs, though they are very demanding, poorly paid and leave employees little family time of their own. When children are brought to Italy, new caring arrangements are needed, but resources are often scant: non-working relatives (such as grandparents) – a critical resource in Italy's 'familistic' welfare system – are often unavailable to immigrant families due to the law's stringent requirements on reunification and movement across frontiers. Also, the role played by immigrant women in the labour market is shifting how genders and generations take part in productive and reproductive activities: some men play a more active role in household and child-care tasks and children (especially in female-headed households) are often expected to become independent early on.

It seems difficult to interpret immigrant families' adaptations to the new country in terms of culture and acculturation alone. After all, these individuals and their relatives are subject to a special set of regulations and economic incorporation, which locates them in the lower strata of a stratified reproduction regime. To interpret the variety of their strategies, it is necessary to consider the way immigrants draw on local and transnational networks, as well as the way these relationships intersect with the civic stratification regime that is imposed upon them.

## Notes

- 1 As Bauböck states (1991), the transnational sphere of market and rights clashes with the bounded nature of welfare systems: as the set of internal rights guaranteed by citizenship status expands, it becomes equally pressing for states to guard and limit access to privileged statuses and, in so doing, generating a proliferation of conditions of partial inclusion.
- 2 This choice is reflected methodologically, namely, in the use of qualitative methods.
- 3 For instance, in their opinion, Chicano families' patriarchal and authoritative parenting style hindered children from learning the skills necessary to survive in an individualistic American society.
- 4 One such feature was the crucial role played by extended family ties.
- 5 At the same time, these authors demonstrate the paradoxical irrefutability of those theories that, when faced with examples such as democratic styles of parenting among Chicano families, traced them back to the influx of North American values to which these families were successfully socialised.
- 6 The works criticise the all-encompassing nature of some conceptions of culture, demonstrating their internal contradictions.

- 7 It is therefore difficult to explain why – despite the phenomenon’s accompanying risk of poverty and having all means of birth control available – teen pregnancy remains so widespread. It is also difficult to explain why, since female employment is relatively easy to gain, some groups tend not to let women be involved in this kind of activity.
- 8 On TCNs’ entry, stay and family reunification, see the Unifying Text of Immigration Law (286/98), Bossi-Fini Law (189/2002) and Decree no. 5/2007 (reception of the UE Directive 2003/86/CE on family reunification); on EU citizens, see Decree no. 30/2007 (reception of the EU 2004/38/CE) and Circular Ministry of Interiors no. 19, 6 April 2007.
- 9 Seasonal workers maximally hold a nine-month stay permit, open-ended workers hold a two-year stay permit and temporary workers hold a one-year stay permit.
- 10 [http://www.esteri.it/MAE/Pubblicazioni/AnnuarioStatistico/2010\\_capitolo\\_secondo.pdf](http://www.esteri.it/MAE/Pubblicazioni/AnnuarioStatistico/2010_capitolo_secondo.pdf).
- 11 President of the Republic Decree no. 30 issued on the 6 February 2007.
- 12 Citizenship can be gained by blood ties; hence, the child of an Italian citizen is also an Italian citizen.
- 13 Before the so-called *decreto sicurezza* (no. 94) came into force in August 2009, a fourth-degree TCN relative living with an Italian citizen could not be expelled. The new law restricts the range of relatives who enjoy this right: today undocumented children, parents, siblings, grandparents and grandchildren of an Italian citizen may be given a family stay permit (though also uncles, aunts and cousins also enjoyed this right in the past).
- 14 Such institutions include the state, the service sector and labour market, but also the family, media and local communities.
- 15 Such means include birth control, abortion, care and health facilities for mothers and children, educational and recreational services.
- 16 In this sense, we want to propose a less celebratory vision of the strength of transnational ties; my interviews have shown how often family transnationalism is an imposed, rather than chosen, condition.
- 17 As a whole, these flows emerged mainly during the last decade.
- 18 According to my elaborations from data available on the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) website (<http://demo.istat.it/altridati/permessi/index.html>), 36 per cent of stay permits issued to Brazilian, Colombian, Dominican, Ecuadorean and Peruvian were for family reasons (compared to 32 per cent for the whole immigrant population).
- 19 <http://demo.istat.it/altridati/permessi/index.html>.
- 20 Italian families are generally less inclined to host husbands and other adult relatives than children. Yet, when children are numerous, a solution becomes all the less feasible. Regardless, any hospitality tends to be limited, usually lasting as long as the work relationship. When the work comes to an end, the domestic worker finds herself both without a house and without a job – this can become a problem, especially if she cannot rely on relatives to sustain her. Finally, we must pay attention to the complex dynamic taking place between the ‘two families’ of the domestic worker: the relation can be one of affection and cooperation, but it can also be characterised by mutual competition. We must not forget that domestic and care workers are paid to take care of other families and houses – the kind of work to leave little room for the workers’ own families and needs. The way children experience this arrangement still also needs deeper investigation.

- 21 Tourist visas were introduced for Colombians in 2001, for Ecuadoreans in 2003, for Dominicans and Peruvians in the early 1990s.
- 22 The last quota decree, which was intended to programme work entries for 2011, established a total of 98,080 requests, 30,000 of which were for domestic work (Decreto del Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri del 30 novembre 2010, <http://www.meltingpot.org/IMG/pdf/testo-decreto-flussi.pdf>).
- 23 <http://www.meltingpot.org/articolo14687.html>.

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**Annex on following page**

Table 13.3 Family reunification processes of couples and single parents

Family structure	Pseudonym	Country	Status	Years undocumented	Profession	Family reunification process
Rejoined family	Raul	Ecuador	Undocumented	6	Cleaner full time	Flor migrated first, after 2 years Raul and the son entered as tourists (4 years old, still undocumented)
	Flor	Ecuador	Undocumented	8	Cleaner + babysitter full time	
Rejoined family	Domingo	Ecuador	Work permit (amnesty 2002)	1	Storekeeper full time	Domingo migrated first, after 3 months Estela and the children (2 and 4 years old, regularised with the mother's work permit) entered as tourists
	Estela	Ecuador	Work permit (amnesty 2002)	1	Cleaner part time	
Rejoined family	Pedro	Ecuador	Undocumented	3	Janitor full time	No separation: all the family migrated together (one daughter, 5 years old, 'regularised' the mother)
	Milagros	Ecuador	Art 31 (juvenile court)	2	Janitor + babysitter full time	
Rejoined family	Victor	Ecuador	Art 31 (juvenile court)	4	Factory worker full time	Victor migrated first, after 1 year Doris entered as a tourist, after other 2 years the daughter did the same (7 years old, regularised through the mother's work permit), accompanied by Doris' daughter
	Doris	Ecuador	Work permit (amnesty 2002)	3	Janitor part time	
Rejoined family	Alfonso	Ecuador	Work permit (amnesty 2002)	2	Factory worker full time	Amanda migrated first, after 1 year Alfonso and the children entered as tourists (5 and 12 years old, regularised through the mother's work permit), after another 4 years the adult daughter did the same (30 years old, still undocumented)
	Amanda	Ecuador	Work permit (amnesty 2002)	3	Factory worker full time	

Table 13.1 Continued

Family structure	Pseudonym	Country	Status	Years undocumented	Profession	Family reunification process
Rejoined family	Miguel	Ecuador	Work permit (amnesty 2002)	1	Driver full time	Miguel migrated first, after 1 year and half Mercedes and the daughters 5 and 8 years old; regularised through the father's work permit entered as tourists
	Mercedes	Ecuador	Undocumented	4	Housemaid	
Rejoined family	Alvaro	Perù	Carta di Soggiorno (amnesty 1995)	4	Junior full time	Alvaro migrated first, after 6 months Felicitas and the son (2 years old, regularised through the father's work permit) entered as tourists
	Felicitas	Perù	Carta di Soggiorno (amnesty 1995)	4	Junior full time	
Reconstituted family	Rosario	Ecuador	Work permit (amnesty 2002)	3	Cleaner full time	Rosario brought her 2 children after 1 year (regularised through the father's work permit) as tourists, but after 4 years they went back in Ecuador to live with the mother None
	Noemi	Ecuador	Art y Juvenile court	6	Cleaner part time	
Reconstituted family	Daniel	Ecuador	Work permit (amnesty 2002)	1	Cleaner full time	None Fanny brought 2 of her 4 children (as tourists) before the introduction of the tourist visa (and she regularised them through 'family cohesion'); the others remain in Ecuador because she's unable to meet the family reunification requirements in terms of housing.
	Fanny	Ecuador	Work permit (amnesty 2002)	1	Cleaner full time	
Separated mother	Lucy	Ecuador	Residence permit (mother of Italian child)	4	Cleaner full time	Lucy brought her three children as tourists after 5 years and regularised them through the last daughter, born in Italy and Italian citizen

Table 18.1 *Continued*

Family structure	Pseudonym	Country	Status	Years undocumented	Profession	Family reunification process
Separated mother	Judith	Dominican	Work permit (amnesty 1995)	2	Babysitter full time	Judith is completing the family reunification procedure and is going to legally bring her son after 13 years of (not consecutive) separation.
Separated mother	Erika	Ecuador	Work permit (amnesty 2002)	4	Cleaner full time	Erika brought her daughter as a tourist and regularised her through 'family cohesion' after 3 years of separation.
Separated father	Diego	Ecuador	Italian citizen (Italian ancestry)	0	Factory worker full time	After two years of separation Diego managed to convince his divorced wife to live with the three children, that entered as tourists and stayed legally being all Italian citizens (Italian ancestry).
Widow	Sabina	Colombian	Carta di Soggiorno (amnesty 1995)	1	Cleaner part time	Sabina brought her daughter as tourist and regularised her through 'family cohesion' after 3 years of separation.
Widow	Nancy	Ecuador	Undocumented	3	Cleaner part time	Nancy migrated in order to give back to her adult daughter (previously migrated in Italy years ago) the granddaughter (regularised through 'family cohesion') she has taken care of in her absence.
Widow	Rosa	Ecuador	Work permit (amnesty 2002)	3	Career cleaner full time	After one year of separation Rosa bought her granddaughter (that she locked after for years after the mother migrated in Spain) but the last remains undocumented because of legal problems arising from the fact Rosa is not her natural parent.



## **14 Gender and intergenerational issues in the circulation of highly skilled migrants: The case of Indian IT professionals**

*Aurélie Varrel*

### **14.1 Introduction**

Studies of highly skilled migration have been broadly imbued with the illusion of a 'smooth circulation of skills', focusing on the legal, economic and political mechanisms (Lowell & Findlay 2003; Martin 2003; Shachar 2006). As a consequence, such studies have been dominated by macro-level methodology that is mostly gender-neutral or male-focused and has largely ignored the implications for families and conjugal relations (Raghuram 2004b). Although highly skilled migration deserves case-specific attention on some levels (Iredale & Appleyard 2001), it is worth investigating the personal dimensions of the migration decision-making process as one would for any other migrant (Kofman & Raghuram 2006). Issues related to gender, family or generational impacts may account for the complex movements of this kind of migrants, as much as economic and sector situations do. In this chapter, I intend to illustrate the importance of such considerations to analyse the circulation and migratory patterns of highly skilled migrants, through the example of return migration.

The return migration of skilled migrants has attracted interest in the field of migration studies, thus balancing the prevailing discourse on circulation (King 2001). It has mostly been described so far in economic terms, with reference to phenomena that have taken place in developing Asian economies, such as Taiwan and South Korea (Saxenian 2006; Kapur 2005). A few recent works have developed more qualitative approaches, drawing attention to the central role occupied by family issues in the decision-making process and in narratives of returning to the country of origin (Ley & Kobayashi 2005; Razum et al. 2005). As Evergeti and Ryan (this volume) put it: 'there is much to be learned by combining the study of migration with family studies'. Taking into account the family dimension unravels the complexity of migration itineraries at the individual and family level, beyond the far too simple explanatory pattern of 'skills circulation'. My goal here is to support inclusion of the topic of transnational family practices in studies of highly skilled migration.

My case study proposes an analysis of the return migration of highly skilled Indian migrants to India from this perspective. The 'Indian soft-

ware engineer' has come to epitomise the globally commodified circulation of skills, as an icon of the knowledge society and Castells' society of flows (Van der Veer 2005; Chakravartty 2005). It has been targeted by various schemes implemented by Western countries, in order to foster the development of national knowledge economies (Shachar 2006), namely in the United Kingdom and Germany as far as Europe is concerned (Meijering 2003; Raghuram 2004a; Upadhyaya 2006b). Beyond the body-shopping circulation, which has been explored by the in-depth work of Biao Xiang (2007), I would like to focus on the 'reverse brain drain' trend taking place since the turn of the century among the Indian community that began settling in the United States in the 1960s. Bangalore, the country's fifth-largest city, which has become known as 'the Silicon Valley of India', is a destination much in favour among these returnees for career reasons (Khadria 2004; Saxenian 2004). I thus selected it as an observation post for the current return migration phenomenon.

This contribution draws on my doctoral research, comprising interviews as well as observation material gathered in Bangalore between 2003 and 2006, including one year of field-work. The sample on which this chapter is based comprises 30 semi-structured interviews conducted with Indians in Bangalore in 2004 and 2006.<sup>1</sup> My interviewees had returned from the US within the last five years after a minimal stay of four years. They were contacted through snowball sampling, resulting in interviews with fifteen men, eight women and seven couples. All respondents were married and between 26 and 45 years old. The family breadwinners were all employed in the flourishing local information technology sector.

The results of my study differ from the assertion of a smooth circulation of skills. The second and third sections of the chapter seek to show that the return to India takes place at the intersection of both economic evolutions and family considerations. The differences between the meaning of 'family' abroad and in India entail considerable changes and an overall reshaping of conjugal and generational roles. The fifth section unravels how the paradoxes and conflicts lying at the core of the return undermine the sustainability of the resettlement in India, and how they make it a stage within an increasingly transnationalised life rather than a return 'for good'.

## 14.2 Migrating and coming back: A new opportunity

The migration of skills from India started under the British Raj, with Britain as the main pole of attraction for students (Visram 1986). At that time, the metropolis of the colonial empire was a place to get university degrees and some professional experience, but most of the colonial migrants went back to their home countries: this pattern is embodied by the

fathers of Indian Independence, who had all spent a period of time in Great Britain, mostly as students, before coming back and getting involved in the anti-colonial struggle.

After India's independence and the dissolution of the British colonial empire, Great Britain was replaced by the US as the major global power, which is a direct consequence of the major shift in the American migration policy that took place in the 1960s. The new policy orientation deliberately put an emphasis on the skills of migrants, rather than their nationality as the quota system previously did (Immigration Act of 1965). This was the real starting point for the making of an Asian Indian<sup>2</sup> community in the US.<sup>3</sup> This community is characterised by a specific social and educational profile, with an overrepresentation of university graduates. According to the 2000 US Census, 56 per cent of the Asian Indian-American population hold at least a college degree, compared with the national average (22 per cent) and to the 'White' group (24 per cent) (US Census Bureau/NAPACDDC 2005). This is reflected by the high yearly median household income of the Asian Indian population (US\$ 61,322), that is, a third more than the national median and a fourth more than that of the 'Non-Hispanic White' population (US Census Bureau/NAPACDDC 2005). Partly because of these specific social and economic features, the Asian Indian community in the US tends to be described and to present itself as a 'model [migrant] community', although this has recently become more and more debated inside the community itself (Lessinger 2003; Prashad 2000).<sup>4</sup>

In India, migrating to the US has gradually become quite a widespread practice in the Indian upper middle class. The urban, educated and well-off minority has used their economic and education capital to get access to the US through skilled migration, which has been a means of reproducing its social and economic domination in India itself, thanks to the remittances sent by migrants to their families and the attached prestige (Fuller & Narasimhan 2007). However, until recently, it used to be a one-way migration, since returning to India was an elusive prospect. Most of highly skilled Indian migrants were unable to come back before retirement. Their country of origin, with its state-controlled economy, did not offer many professional opportunities, which encouraged migration in the first place as well as prevented returns. Professionals holding transferable skills who were able to come back and pursue their career at home mostly held select occupations: physicians, architects and academics.<sup>5</sup> The prevailing desire to go back home, which is never realised as it entails too many drawbacks, is well known in the Indian community as 'plus-one-year syndrome'.<sup>6</sup> Some authors have popularised the idea that India has deliberately 'overproduced' college graduates, with a view to creating a system of brain export (Gaillard & Gaillard 1999; Khadria 1999).

The situation clearly changed at the turn of the century. It corresponds

to the first results of the liberalisation of the Indian economy launched in 1991. Development of the Indian IT sector, the relocation of high value-added activities to India and the establishment of multinational companies have created job opportunities that could not be met by the Indian job market alone. Companies were forced to turn to the international job market and international human resources consultancy firms in order to meet these new skills requirements, especially to recruit their middle-rank management staff. The Indian government has initiated a totally new policy to reconnect with its diaspora, and has changed its attitude towards migrants from one of indifference to warm welcome and support (Lall 2001; Therwath 2007).

At the same time, the American economy, which employed more than one million persons of Asian Indian origin (ex-Indian citizens included), experienced a slowdown that first affected foreigners working in the IT sector, leading to a fragile situation for Asian Indians in the US. A few thousand Asian Indian highly skilled migrants who had recently arrived on H-1B visas for temporary work were forced to go back to India as a consequence of these massive layoffs; H-1B visas do not allow holders to stay in the US beyond a three-month period of unemployment (Varma & Rogers 2004).<sup>7</sup> Besides this, the 'American dream' shared by many highly skilled migrants was shattered by the events of 9/11. Its aftermath directly affected the Asian Indian community, with several cases of harassment towards Muslim and Sikh Indians being massively reported by the media in the Indian and Indian American community (Chakravartty 2005).

The intersection of these developments in the two countries has led some highly skilled migrants to re-assess their migration project and its perspectives. Many of them entered the US on the basis of non-immigrant visas (F-1 or H-1B),<sup>8</sup> and they did not intend initially to settle there for good. As a consequence, by the turn of the century, India experienced the beginning of a wave of returns that was so far unheard of, though comparable to movements experienced in Taiwan or Korea some years before (Iredale, Guo & Rozario 2004; Kapur 2005). We can thus distinguish between two categories of highly skilled returned Indian migrants: those who had to go back to India as a consequence of redundancy and their H-1B status and those who chose to go back to India without being compelled to, by taking one of the new job opportunities made available in India. The first category came back largely in 2001 and 2002 and did not stay very long; the second category has continuously increased since this period.<sup>9</sup>

This chapter focuses on the second category.<sup>10</sup> It comprises mostly professionals who came back as a family with their spouse and children and are employed in the huge IT sector that characterises Bangalore. Return migration here turns out to be a type of family migration triggered by family issues.

### 14.3 Returning to India: A decision embedded in intergenerational considerations

The economic and domestic contexts in both countries have certainly encouraged migrants to return to India, but most of my interviewees insisted on the family dimension as the key factor in the decision-making process. It is interesting to note that this transcends the classic economic pull-push explanation currently used as far as skilled migrants are concerned (Kofman & Raghuram 2006). Paradoxical as it may seem, Upadhya and Vasavi (2006: 109-110) trace this commitment by IT professionals to traditional values and family in terms of identity reproduction.

[T]hese young professionals profess devotion to the family, including caring for the older generation, and stress the importance of maintaining their culture and values through the medium of the family. For these highly mobile and transnational subjects, the family is valued not only as an embodiment of Indian tradition but also as the primary means through which tradition can be retained and transmitted.

Family turns out to be an obsessive topic in the narratives of returnees. Its meaning extends far beyond the restrictive modern conception of family as nuclear, to embrace the Indian conception of the extended, multigenerational family. As people had already built a life and a career on their own in the US, reuniting the family in a single country is often presented as the major incentive for returning to India. It is expressed as a moral duty pertaining to core values. Under the 'family' theme, one can discern two generations central to the return project: 1) the parents and 2) the children of the migrants.<sup>11</sup>

#### 14.3.1 *Doing one's duty of care towards the older generation*

In India, even in affluent, urban and Westernised families, the tradition still prevails that the first son should take care of his parents once they are old. Ideally, this son is expected to settle with his own family in the home of his parents. This family residential pattern is known as the 'joint family': traditionally, three generations under the same roof are supposed to symbolise happiness.<sup>12</sup> The patrilocal residential pattern implies that many young brides in India must stay with their in-laws, serve them and be submissive to their authority. This traditional duty has become more and more difficult to fulfil in the urban middle class for two main reasons. First, decreasing family size under the fertility transition has had a strong impact on the middle class, where families have shrunk to a standard of two or three children, if not only one, since as early as the 1960s and

1970s. Second, this traditional duty has been combined with the spreading of international migration to developed countries among the same category of the population. The loneliness experienced by aged parents left behind in India became a major concern for migrant children by the 1980s, as well as a hot topic in the middle class and its media.<sup>13</sup>

According to my interviews, the return to India is often motivated by the desire or obligation to take care of one's parents, especially when the male migrant is the only or eldest son and/or when all children are abroad. It also appeared that the return of one migrant may be part of a long-term strategy among siblings, who organise a chain migration. I observed at least two such cases in my sample; each of the siblings could go abroad successively, without having their parents left by themselves in India at any given moment.

Alternative solutions to return have also been experienced, especially by having one's parents come to America. This has even become a frequent practice in the Indian American community. It suits the family reunification schemes: parents of the permanent residents may be allowed to come on a temporary basis (six months for a non-immigrant visitor's visa), and parents of the naturalised citizens may be allowed to stay in the US on a permanent basis (immigrant visa based on family preferences). As a consequence, spending several months in the US on a regular or yearly basis is a common practice for Indians whose adult children settled there.

Besides this, having one's parents or in-laws come from India on a regular or permanent basis often gives the migrant family an alternative to the deficient provision of public care in the US. Grandparents are considered an inexpensive solution to look after children. This transnational organisation of care on the intergenerational family scale ensures the basic reproduction of the household. It intersects with gender boundaries, as this arrangement helps young mothers pursue a job. It can thus be considered a transnational and intergenerational support to the migrants' accumulation strategy by providing free care to migrant dual-career couples, as also described by Erygeti and Ryan (this volume).

Nevertheless this kind of arrangement has drawbacks, which have become well known in the migrant community and at home, including the loneliness experienced by elderly people in an unknown context and their loss of autonomy in a foreign country.<sup>14</sup> These problems are especially difficult to cope with in the case of middle-class, urban, educated elderly who find it tough to face cultural distance and asymmetrical racial relations, when in Indian society they held a dominant socio-economic position all their life. As a consequence, this solution is often deeply resented by the older generation. Furthermore, it becomes impossible when migrants' parents are in a health condition no longer permitting travel by plane.

### 14.3.2 *Ensuring the transmission of an Indian cultural identity to one's children*

The other major family reason for returning to India quoted by these migrants is the issue of transmission. Transmitting 'Indian values' to one's children was another obsessive topic during interviews, as many interviewees emphasised the advantages of a return to India in order to ensure such a transmission through 'exposure'. Offering one's children the opportunity to spend their childhood in India often negates the hardships faced by children of Indian origin brought up abroad because of mixed, hybrid identities. These problems are illustrated by reference to the well-known acronym ABCD: American-born confused *desis* (a *desi* referring here to someone of Indian origin). By contrast, having one's children come to India and spend a part of their childhood there is perceived by informants as giving them roots. It unravels the parents' desire of preserving a sense of belonging to India for the generation who was born and/or brought up abroad. What is at stake is giving them some elements of Indian culture, shared with the previous generations. It also reflects a conservative conception of identity as necessarily based on a national, unique reference, that of parents and their lineage.

The return also aims to allow grandparents and grandchildren to spend time with each other. Development of this relationship and its content is another way to ensure transmission of cultural identity. Thus, the inter-generational dimension prevails in this case as well.

So the decision to return is deeply embedded in considerations of moral duty, as well as transmission of cultural identity. India is constructed as the place where both can be done in the most efficient way. Contrary to the first wave of post-1965 Indian migration, migrants are not obliged to make a choice to either settle abroad permanently or meet these cultural requirements. The new situation gives them the opportunity to do both sequentially. Return migration turns out to be an original form of ensuring transnational care, especially towards the older generation.

## 14.4 **Implementation of the return: Reconfiguring generational and gender roles within the family**

Return as a process entails a triple reorganisation of relations between the persons involved. This means reorganisation of the dominant relations, by shifting from a Western-like nuclear family to the Indian extended family, reconfiguration of the gendered roles in the couple and the family and the spatial reorganisation of different members of the extended family.

#### 14.4.1 *Reconfiguration of the generational roles in the extended family*

Migration to the West is often described by migrant women as an exceptional opportunity to escape the Indian social and family pressure, and specifically the burdens and difficulties of the traditional extended family lifestyle. This may be the incentive to marry a migrant to some extent (Kalpagam 2005).

The return causes a considerable change to the family structure and everyday life. It is an opportunity to come back, to be close to one's relatives, which is one of its goals. This new proximity, however, disrupts organisation of the nuclear family as it prevailed abroad because of the very migration and distance. Returning to India implies being re-included inside the dense Indian family networks and the much more hierarchical and controlled family organisation. The family is structured around the older generation's authority over the rest of the family members. Furthermore, all relatives have an influence on the actions and decisions of every member of the family. Such change extends to the education of the children: the relatives are closely involved in this in India, which is very different to the parents' prominent role as unique source of authority in the US.

Sometimes this materialises into the traditional Indian joint-family settlement pattern, which means accommodating the husband's parents at home (and sometimes his siblings as well), on a part- or full-time basis. Due to their long working hours, this practice is especially favoured among IT professionals. They rely heavily on grandparents to provide support and care for their children (Fuller & Haripriya 2007: 147; Upadhyia & Vasavi 2006: 111). From all these elements, it follows that return implies a reshaping of the 'nuclear family' into a new family organisation that is more or less easily negotiated by the ex-migrants.

#### 14.4.2 *The reconfiguration of gender roles*

Gender biases being at the core of the return process, return to India also entails the renegotiation of gender roles in the couple and the family. Returning migrants want to maintain the continuity of their careers because they are professionals, mostly in their late twenties or thirties. The return takes place in the course of their professional life, contrary to retirement returns (a well-documented topic as shown by King 2001). But this mostly turns out to be career continuity enjoyed by men, fathers and husbands. Based on my sample and field-work, the shift from dual-career couple to man-as-sole-breadwinner appears to be a major trend, except for a few cases.

This has to do with the implementation of the return process itself. The process is in fact composed of two successive phases: first, the search for a job in India and, second, the whole family's return to India. Organising



a departure from the US and the family's resettlement in India can take place only after one of the parents, usually the father, has found a job in India. This gender bias corresponds to both Indian and IT job markets biases, which will be further developed in the following section. As a consequence, women usually take charge of the practical dimensions of the return and resettlement process, including the international move, administrative challenges, children's adaptation to a new environment and the ultimate organisation of a new everyday life in a country very different from where the family lived for several years. This role means that women cannot look for a job either before or immediately after their arrival in India.

Nevertheless, among the majority of couples interviewed, the wife held an occupation in the US. Return thus took place at the expense of women's careers and financial autonomy. This is all the more striking, as many women interviewed had achieved comparable diplomas and secured similar jobs abroad as their husbands. In our sample, all the women held a university degree, three quarters had an occupation in the US and two thirds were employed in the IT sector, like their husbands. These observations can be explained by the migrants belonging to the middle class as well as prevailing mechanisms in the formation of couples in India, where the practice of arranged marriage still dominates though is evolving (Palriwala & Uberoi 2005). In open-minded, middle-class families, the traditional norm of spousal education level (i.e. the bride is less educated than the groom) has changed: in order to optimise the 'matching', more and more parents seek a potential partner with the same education level and the same job as their child's, thus hoping the couple-to-be has some common interests.<sup>15</sup>

Return therefore entails the reconfiguration of gender relations, in the sense that most couples revert to stereotypical traditional gender roles: man as breadwinner, woman as housewife. Most women resent this change of status in the couple and their eviction from the workforce. Moreover, my interviews with women who had come back for more than one year revealed that most could not resume a job even in the long term, due to social, material and professional reasons. First, an 'off' period in this sector is very negatively interpreted, as the path of innovation is very quick. Second, the work rhythm and organisation of this sector in South India is highly intensive: it is standard to come to the office five to six days a week (except in Western companies) and spend ten to twelve hours a day, which is considered less feasible for mothers. It is a male-dominated sector, be it in India or in Western countries, all the more reason as the skill level is high. The unemployment of highly skilled experienced professionals pertains to the reproduction of gendered social norms and roles of Indian society within the corporate sector, especially IT (Arun & Arun 2001; Raghuram 2004b; Upadhy 2006a). As a consequence, it is difficult

for women to be recruited once they have children, a contrast to prospects before having children (Upadhyaya 2006a: 77). This seems quite specific to the IT sector, since the few women who turned to teaching as an occupation were able to find a job quite easily in Bangalore. Women migrants who work in a 'feminine' sector do not experience unemployment and deskilling after returning to India.<sup>16</sup>

The social pressure and gendered roles outside the economic sphere do not help women in looking for a job, either: family and peer pressure tend to discourage women to even seek. If being employed is considered suitable during migration, in order to maximise the workforce and accumulation strategy, it does not seem so any longer after coming back. A strategy of compensation, in order to command self-respect, consists of having some part-time activity. Most women previously employed in the IT sector considered doing online subcontracting of basic software maintenance. However, we hardly met or heard of anyone able to actually do it, as home-based work is little developed in India's IT sector.<sup>17</sup>

From this perspective, it is interesting to note how women living in an extended family had an advantage at finding a job. They could sometimes rely on their female relatives, usually their mothers-in-law, to provide care, which allowed them to meet the demanding time requirements characteristic of the Bangalore IT sector. This highlights the fact that women can negotiate space to work inside apparently patriarchal family lifestyles in an original manner. Such arrangements recompose the generational balance of power and authority, departing from clichés on authoritarian mothers-in-law and submissive daughters-in-law. The older generation can become a resource.

So the experience of return turns out to be a gendered one. It is perceived and experienced in different ways by men and women, for reasons pertaining to the organisation of the return process itself, on the one hand, and to the Indian context itself and the way it is reproduced in the so-called global IT sector, on the other hand. It is significant that many of the men who were interviewed alone spontaneously recounted how what their wives considered the pros and cons of returning to India probably differed from theirs. Moreover, many on such an occasion offered to discuss this with their wives, expressing their perception of the return as an unequal experience along gendered lines. In fact, the difficulties experienced in the negotiation of gender and generational relations can be a source of failure for the return project.

#### 14.4.3 *The spatial reorganisation of the family*

Bangalore and its dynamic labour market for IT professionals offers many professional opportunities for those returning to India.<sup>18</sup> It is a two-way gate for the circulation of the Indian workforce, either to leave or to come back (Khadria 2004; Saxenian 2004). Interestingly enough, about half of the people in my sample had neither roots nor even any knowledge of Bangalore before migrating there. Bangalore is then a paradoxical 'place of return': it allows people to go back to their country, but is often not their place of origin.<sup>19</sup> In my interviews, it accounted for some complex spatial arrangements on the scale of the family. The return, its place and its conditions were adapted in different ways by each member of the family.

A husband could, for instance, find a job in Bangalore though live there by himself, while his wife and children stayed with relatives in another part of the country. This spatial separation was expected to strengthen the bonds with the extended family as well as the cultural exposure of children to the native area and language of their parents. Distance could also be a way to negotiate a couple crisis, due to frustration or disagreement between husband and wife on the issue of return. This is reflected in the vignettes, as derived from my fieldnotes, that appear throughout this chapter.

M., 31, works for a very well-known multinational IT company. He works as a middle-rank manager in the Bangalore branch, where he has been sent to dynamise the management of human resources a few months before the interview. He and his wife are from a big North Indian city, but have been in the US since they got married. He stays by himself in Bangalore, because his wife preferred to settle in their native town with their two children, to spend time with both their families of origin. So he flies every other weekend to go and meet up with his family and relatives there.

The duty to take care of parents, which is a major incentive to come back, is also undermined by the spatial distance between Bangalore and the place of origin. Returned migrants negotiate it in different ways, according to their career expectations. Depending on their field of expertise, many did not have more than two or three possible destinations in India, all of them being major cities. Considering both distance and transportation issues in India, the return could take place quite far from the parents' location. This translates into complex spatial patterns of travel and relocation in order to face one's intergenerational duties.

A., 31, and his wife came back to India after four years spent in the US because two of his close relatives were in bad health. But the poor availability of jobs in India in his cutting-edge R&D domain of

activity at the time of their return did not allow him to go back close enough to their small native town in North India. So they stay in Bangalore where he has got a very good position. A trip back to their native place from Bangalore takes twelve hours by plane and train. As a consequence, they hardly go there, once or twice a year, not more than when he worked in the US. Still, he considers it better and more convenient to be in India; in case of an emergency, he can go there any time within a day. In the US, issues such as finding a plane ticket and getting leave from his company might considerably delay such an urgent departure.

The opposite situation is frequent as well, having one's parents move to Bangalore. This turns out to be a potentially tough situation for the persons involved, as indicated by the story of an interviewee.

P., 36, and her husband came back from the US after four years because he is the only son and his parents are very old and in bad condition. They are from Delhi, but there are no interesting jobs for him there in his field. So they settled in Bangalore and had his ill parents move in with them. It is quite tough for the old couple who are cut off from their everyday landmarks, cultural and social context. As their condition requires permanent attention, P. told me extensively about the difficulties in hiring a maid who can speak Hindi,<sup>20</sup> so that they can communicate with her.

The distance to the place of origin can also be a way to negotiate and balance the family pressure; on several occasions, interviewees, including men, emphasised the advantages of not having settled back in the same city as their relatives, and sometimes even their preference for staying quite far from them.

S., 35, has come back to India after doing his Master's thesis and PhD in a prestigious US university. He and his wife are Tamil Brahmins from Chennai. He would probably have found a job there if he had wanted to, but had been offered a very exciting job in Bangalore first, so he did not search further. Moreover, he admitted that staying at some distance from Chennai [five to six hours by train or road] was something that they appreciated, after having developed quite an independent conjugal lifestyle abroad.

We can infer from these examples that return in the name of 'family values' or 'Indian values' may lead to the spatial dispersion of family members or uprooting and relocating the aged. This appears contradictory to the original goal. Yet it corresponds to the negotiation between indi-

vidual interests (mostly those of men, their careers and their own relatives) and duties of intergenerational care and intergenerational transmission. The complex situations that are created may prove even more puzzling in the long term, as they threaten to undermine the sustainability of the return project.

#### **14.5 Going again: The evolution towards transnational circulation on an intergenerational scale**

As seen previously in this chapter, the return may in some cases be an alternative to a transnational circulation of the older generation. However, the transnational practices do not necessarily disappear after returning to India. A significant number of interviewees clearly consider their and their family's future on a transnational scale. The new spatial development of the IT sector offers new perspectives to its employees: 'IT professionals need not choose, once and for all, between being resident and non-resident Indians, because they can fairly easily go away and return' (Fuller & Narasimhan 2007: 148).

Although many of my interviewees did not explicitly plan to migrate again, they could not exclude this possibility for professional reasons. The permanent spatial reorganisation of the production, especially relevant for the IT sector, accounts for this uncertainty and potential mobility.

Staying or moving also needs to be articulated with the successive stages of life, according to the pattern proposed by Ley and Kobayashi (2005) when analysing the transnational life patterns of middle-class returnees from Canada to Hong Kong. For instance, many of my interviewees had plans to later send their children to the US for higher education. Elaborate comparisons are drawn between the two educational systems, the aim being to get a 'good' diploma giving access to 'good' jobs. Some parents then even consider accompanying their children to the US again, where they can work and support the cost of American higher education.<sup>21</sup> As a consequence, the future of the family at the intergenerational level appears to be firmly rooted on a transnational spatial scale, which is increasingly the life space of the Indian middle class (Khilnani 1999; Deshpande 2003).

These plans are enabled by the privileged access to circulation through multi-citizenship in many families. Children born in the US are automatically entitled to American citizenship, and many returnees have siblings in the US, which entitles them in both cases to immigration visas under family reunification schemes.<sup>22</sup>

As a consequence, I support the methodological need, argued by Ervegti and Ryan (this volume) for a life-long, processual approach to understanding migrants' practices of managing their different responsibilities 'here' and 'there'.

#### 14.5.1 *Failures of the return migration project*

Adjustments required from the various members of the nuclear and extended family are a clear source of frustration and dissatisfaction that comes with the return. Frequently during interviews – whether conducted with men, women or couples – I heard the following sentence: ‘This is not what I had expected.’ Analysing the limits of the return project, I learned that in some cases return is followed by a new migration after one year or a few years.

The accounted failures<sup>23</sup> seem attributable to two different sets of reasons, both related to the family dimension of the migration process. The first refers to a lack of family embeddedness. There are no intergenerational incentives to balance the potential frustrations that returnees may face. This is namely the case for returnees who no longer have relatives in India, such as second-generation migrants of Indian origin taking advantage of the Bangalore economic boom to come and spend some time in India, but not staying in the long term. This also includes people who come back solely for professional reasons. They consider their stay in India as a stage requisite to their career progression, before going to another place according to the circulation pattern prevailing in the human resources management of many multinational companies.

The second set refers to the inability of one or several members of the nuclear family to re-adapt, which may also trigger a re-departure. It seems re-departure is often initiated by women unable to cope with the renegotiation of gender relations in the couple and with the loss of their professional status.

As a whole, feelings on the issue of emigrating again are quite mixed. The following story is typical in this regard.

C. came back in 2003 with his wife and children. He is a middle-rank manager in an electronics multinational company. He no longer has any relatives in India except a very old grandmother, as all have migrated to the US. He is actually a US citizen himself. He initiated the return, although he did not have precise or pressing reasons to come back. The following quote answers the question on whether the family intends to stay in India on a permanent basis: ‘I don’t really have any regret about this move. But then ... I don’t think that I would spend the rest of my life here. That’s my feeling today. Tomorrow it might change. I think it’s going to remain an experience. [...] I know in my mind that it is a short-term thing, my wife also. It’s an experience, a useful experience.’

This highlights the fact that many ex-migrants consider their future on a transnational scale. Exceptions are those lacking a legal or professional

way to go back, because they were unable to secure a Green Card before returning or have no relatives who are US citizens or permanent residents able to get them a new visa – these are the few who do not consider leaving India again.

## 14.6 Conclusion

This chapter emphasised the relevance of the family and, especially, intergenerational issues in the analysis of highly skilled migration patterns. The ‘rational’ circulation of skills operating, according to the remapping of the knowledge economy, turns out to be an illusion produced by the ideologies pertaining to IT and globalisation. Although new opportunities offered by the permanent remapping of global production in India explain the increase of returns since the year 2000, these returns intersect with considerations of cultural transmission and intergenerational care. Such different issues interact in the decision-making process of return and relocation, which account for the frequent paradoxes observed in the way resettlement in India takes place. Moreover, return has major implications for gender and intergenerational roles and relations as well as for the overall family structure. Return migration turns out to be an original form of providing care to the elderly left behind, contributing to a topic not yet very well documented, as mentioned in this chapter’s introduction (see also Schans & De Valk this volume). This makes return migration a complex and contradictory process, which may serve as a mere stage in more transnationalised life patterns.

As a methodological consequence, this chapter advocates a more intersectional approach to highly skilled migration. Studies of this field can no longer focus on professionals only, but must include the family as a whole – both the nuclear and extended family and its different members. Conversely, the issue of class must be interpreted in a truly inclusive, critical manner to promote comparative approaches on transnational practices.

## Notes

- 1 Almost all respondents were Indian by birth, although nine people had become US citizens within the last five years. Indian citizenship is based on both *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis*, and is exclusive of any other citizenship. US citizenship is automatically granted to any child born in the US. Indian people who apply for American citizenship must renounce their Indian citizenship during the process of naturalisation. Two respondents were American citizens by birth. One respondent was born in the US to Indian parents, but his family left the US when he was two; he was brought up in India, where he lived until age 21, thus considering

himself rather an Indian than an American. One respondent was the white American wife of an Indian returnee, who came back with her to his hometown of Bangalore.

- 2 In the US, people from India have been named East Indians or Asian Indians, to distinguish them from Native Americans. I will use Asian Indians for the rest of this chapter.
- 3 There were merely a few thousand Asian Indians in the US until the 1960s, being a consequence of the anti-Asian immigration laws promulgated at the beginning of the twentieth century. Most of them were the descendants of the railway and agricultural workers who had reached the continent at the turn of the century (Leonard 1997).
- 4 This 'model community' designation and auto-designation can also be observed in the case of several other groups of Asian origin, such as South Korean and Taiwanese communities (Park & Park 2005).
- 5 We conducted an additional comparative set of formal interviews and informal discussions with ex-migrants working in these occupations in Bangalore.
- 6 This is described broadly in monographs of the Indian community in the US, as well as in novels written by Indian-American authors. A widespread attitude towards returning to India is essentialised in the common refrain 'next year maybe (we will go back)'. This notion has been caricatured as the 'plus-one-year syndrome' – the very language of which hints at the scientific occupations that prevail in the Indian community.
- 7 The H1-B visa is a 'non-immigrant' visa for professionals in 'specialty occupations'. Starting in the mid-1990s, it has been issued massively, especially to IT professionals who feed a workforce to this sector of the American economy. The H1-B visa scheme started in 1994; since 1999, Indian holders of the visa have each year represented at least one third of the total holders worldwide (Miano 2005). For additional details on US immigration policy and schemes, refer to the websites of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (<http://www.uscis.gov>) and the Department of Homeland Security (<http://www.dhs.gov>), which provides exhaustive annual reports.
- 8 The F-1 is a student visa. Many migrants arrive from India as students (mostly at the post-graduate level), and enter the American job market after completing a Master's degree or a PhD.
- 9 The Indian government does not keep records on the entry of its nationals, so there are only estimates of such returns. Moreover, the exit of highly skilled migrants is not officially registered, since, unlike their unskilled counterparts, people holding a university degree need not ask for clearance before migrating. As a consequence, the figures for migration and return of the highly skilled are only estimates. For example, the Indian National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) estimates that some 30,000 Indian IT professionals returned to India in 2004-2005 (<http://www.nasscom.in>).
- 10 In 2004 in Bangalore, we conducted a total of 45 formal interviews, 30 of which we used for this chapter according to select profiles.
- 11 Fuller and Narasimhan (2007: 146-147) also highlight the centrality of this duality in the field study they conducted in Chennai between 2003 and 2005.
- 12 The patriarchal residential pattern is predominant in India. There are a few exceptions, related to specific sub-casts or so-called 'tribes', particularly in South India (the Nair sub-cast in Kerala).



- 13 Bangalore even has an association of parents of migrants, which aims at being a support group for lonely elderly people.
- 14 These have been well described in short stories written by well-known Indian novelists or writers of Indian origin, such as Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Anita Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri.
- 15 This can be easily observed through the marriage ads placed in Indian and Indian diaspora newspapers and on websites.
- 16 This emphasises the relevance of a precise analysis of the occupation profile of the women, especially of their sector of employment, as Raghuram (2004b) puts it.
- 17 Fuller and Narasimhan (2007) refer to women who were able to find home-based part-time work in the Chennai IT sector, though were previously employed in a Chennai company from which they resigned for personal reasons. These women thus relied on already established professional relations to secure sub-contracted work on an interpersonal basis, whereas the women we met had hardly any professional network in Bangalore.
- 18 According to NASSCOM, about 150,000 persons were employed in the IT sector in 2004, when we conducted the main part of the field research (in Upadhy & Vasavi 2006).
- 19 This distinction is of importance in a country of India's size and cultural diversity. To illustrate, some people I met in Bangalore could not speak any of the local languages. Bangalore is located in South India, so the frequently spoken languages are Kannada (the official state language) and Tamil. Some knowledge of English is frequent among literate people.
- 20 Hindi, although the other national language of India along with English, is not very frequently used. It is identified as a 'North Indian' language whose use is often resented by the local South Indian population, even in a 'cosmopolitan' city such as Bangalore.
- 21 The professionals employed in the Indian IT sector are very well paid, in terms of India's cost of living. The level of wages reaches amounts unheard of in India fifteen years ago, though is still not comparable to either American or European wages.
- 22 See note 7.
- 23 In our sample, at least two families had gone back to the US between 2004 and 2006. A few others were considering this option. We also relied on the second-hand narratives of relatives and friends of previously returned families.

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## 15 Negotiating transnational caring practices among migrant families

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### 15.1 Introduction

Currently, there is increased political and academic interest in family migration and migrant families. This has led to theorisations of 'transnational living' that tend to assume that transnationalism has been made easy by advances in modern travel and digital communications. More recent studies are now exploring how and to what extent members of migrant families negotiate their long-distance relations and caring practices (Ryan, 2007; Zontini, 2006, 2007; Evergeti, 2006, 2008; Baldassar & Baldock 2000; Baldassar, 2007; Banfi & Boccagni this volume). Our aim in this chapter is to conduct a brief yet critical exploration of the relevant literature, highlight the complexities and changing character of transnational family links and explore how they are negotiated and managed through time and space and with the changing circumstances of migrants and their families 'here and there'.

In the first part of the chapter we give a short but critical examination of the term 'transnationalism', highlighting the importance of migrants' agency and family interactions in understanding how long-distance family relations work in practice. Often this field is theoretically driven, though recent empirical studies have shown that transnational caring practices are diverse and depend on the changing circumstances and living arrangements of migrants and their families. Our discussion explores some practices of transnational or long-distance caring through empirical examples from our own work and other relevant literature.

Recent increases in the migration of domestic workers and paid carers, and the ways in which women are involved in transnational caring, have led to the development of what has been called the 'global chains of care' paradigm. This theoretical model seeks to explain the phenomenon of domestic workers in terms of social disadvantages and power inequalities where Western women employ socially disadvantaged migrant women as nannies and maids who, in turn, leave a 'caring vacuum' back in their countries of origin. This concept could provide some interesting insights into the caring roles of domestic workers. However, as we will show in our discussion, it fails to capture the diversity and changing nature of caring responsibilities of migrants (whether domestic workers or not) and

the complex web of interactions that support and maintain transnational family links. In the second part of this chapter, we critically engage with the concept of global chains of care and explore its limitations.

In any analysis of transnational caring practices, we need to engage with the concept of family as a long-distance unit whose members are maintained through complex ongoing interactions. In this respect, we wish to question the concept of family as a static bounded unit and explore its fluidity, both in terms of household composition and the way in which family members negotiate relationships and caring responsibilities across borders. Furthermore, migration research has traditionally looked at the migrants and their families in the countries of destination, without giving much consideration to the role of family members and other relatives 'back home'. In the third section of this chapter we highlight the need for an interactionist approach that takes seriously into account the processes through which migrants and their families both 'here and there' manage relations and caring practices throughout the life course. Furthermore, we provide empirical examples from our studies of European migrants in the United Kingdom (namely, Greek, Irish and Polish) as well as other studies looking at the experiences of overseas immigrants.

Finally, we emphasise the importance of a methodological stance sensitive to the dynamism and diversity of the transnational experiences highlighted throughout our discussion. We argue that narratives, life stories and ethnographic observations can provide an invaluable account of the inter-subjective and 'processual' nature of migrant-lived experiences.

## 15.2 Transnational links and long-distance caring

Theories of migration have been undergoing rapid change in recent decades. During the 1990s, there was growing interest in the role of social networks in facilitating and perpetuating migration. While acknowledging that migration may take many varied forms, Jordan and Düvell (2003) argue that it is rarely an isolated decision pursued by individual agents, but rather a collective action involving families, kinships and other communal contacts. The decision to migrate is influenced by existence of, and participation in, social networks connecting people in different geographical locations (Boyd 1989). Networks may be defined as a process of maintaining and building ties that depends on and, in turn, reinforces social relations across space, linking migrants and non-migrants (Boyd 1989). Theories of migratory social networks led in the 1990s to what Vertovec (2001: 576) calls the 'shift to a transnational approach toward migration processes and migrant communities'. The sending of remittances, regular communication and travel back home, maintaining an interest in home events and culture and reciprocal caregiving have all been

interpreted as evidence of transnationalism. The concept of transnationalism has proliferated through social sciences research on migration. According to Cano (in Vertovec 2007: 964), while in the early 1980s there was only a handful of articles that used the terms 'transnational' or 'transnationalism', by 2003 there were over 1,300 using these terms in relation to migration and movement. Glick Schiller, Basch & Blanc Szanton (1992) have defined transnationalism as a process through which migrants create and maintain social relations connecting their societies of settlement and origin.

However, some analysts argue that transnationalism has been defined too loosely, making it difficult to evaluate the content, intensity and importance of transnational relations (for a critique, see Rusinovic 2008). In addition, there has been some discussion about the sustainability and durability of transnational links, especially through the life course, as migrants' age and their needs and mobility change (Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt 1999). Therefore, as we will show in our discussion, in the lived experiences of migrants and their families, transnational links, and especially transnational caring, can take many different forms that can change over time.

In the 1990s, transnationalism was discussed mainly in relation to remittances, the movement of capital and the policies and legal framework that regulated them (Bryceson & Vuorela 2002: 3-4). A concern with the processes and implications of 'globalisation' and different forms of family migration led to an increased attempt to re-think the notions of culture, migration, family and caregiving (Vertovec 1999, 2002; Portes et al. 1999). More recently, the discourse on transnational families has focused on the activities and practices of people who are members of long-distance families and have multiple identities and loyalties (Zontini 2006; Evergeti 2006, 2008). However, we could argue that even the families of the early migrants to the US during the turn of the twentieth century were 'transnational' in that they maintained some important family links and relations across borders (mainly through remittances). What has changed fundamentally in the more recent migration trends is the intensity and the types of relations migrants maintain with their kin and families back home, including caring roles and responsibilities and the way the ease of travelling and advances in telecommunications have made such links possible (see e.g. Varrel this volume). However, what is missing from more recent theoretical literature are the ways in which migrants and their families negotiate such long-distance relationships and the difficulties they encounter in doing so (but see the empirical work of Zontini 2006, 2007; Evergeti 2006, 2008). In addition, it is important to acknowledge that transnational social relations may not necessarily provide positive sources of support and caregiving, but instead may place a heavy demand, both financial and emotional, on migrants (Ryan 2004, 2007).

Until recently, studies of transnationalism have focused on 'transmigrants', their lives, economic activities and assimilation in the country of destination. However, a focus on transnational families and their caring practices across the borders requires a broader theoretical and methodological focus on both sending and receiving countries and cultures. This emphasis can provide us with an important insight into the decisions to migrate and the role that families, communities and kin staying behind have played in such decisions. In this respect, state responses to migration, international relations between sending and receiving countries (for example, special arrangements between different countries), but also the historical context (in terms of the time and circumstances of migration) all give important insights for the macro-reasons of migration (Baldassar 2007). On the other hand, a methodological turn towards 'transnationalism from below' focuses on family as a flexible social practice, providing an understanding of culturally produced notions of roles and obligations towards caring responsibilities and how family relations develop over time (see e.g. the cases discussed in Banfi & Boccagni and Bonizzoni this volume).

In studies of migration and transnational care practices, the focus is often on settlement and employment policies in the receiving country. These do play an important role, especially when we are talking about parents' and other relatives' migration restrictions. For example, migrants may decide to bring their ageing parents over in order to look after them properly. Although it might be easier for EU migrants, the situation is different in Australia and United States or for parents of third-country nationals trying to enter the UK. The problem is that elderly migrants are sometimes seen as a 'burden' for the social and health services. The frequent assumption is that ageing parents are not in good health or that the caring is one way – that is, from the migrant children and the state to the ageing parents, with no consideration of older migrants as active members in transnational caring provision (Baldassar 2007). This assumption fails to see that ageing parents who join or come to visit their children might also be capable of looking after grandchildren or provide other important practical support (Baldassar 2007; Zontini 2007). In this respect, we need to move beyond a narrow focus simply on state policies and towards a more interactionist analysis that takes seriously into consideration the individuals involved in migration. It is only then that we will be able to explore how norms and values about care change over time, through movement to different cultures and changing circumstances for both migrants and their families back home.

An analysis of transnational caring practices raises a number of pertinent questions about how migrants and their families manage such practices and relationships across and within national borders. A focus on ageing and changing needs through the life course illustrates the dynamism of transnational caring roles and responsibilities. An examination



of the different roles performed by men and women suggests the gendering of caregiving practices and the ways in which households and families may be reconstituted through migration. Studies of different migrant groups reveal how caring strategies and options may be shaped by migration structures and institutions, for example, transnational mobility may be limited or facilitated within different migration contexts (Burholt 2004). These issues are illustrated in the literature on global chains of care. Nevertheless, as we will show, this paradigm with its emphasis on power relations and social divisions, has failed to address the multiple contexts and diversity of transnational care provision in which migrants and their families are involved.

### 15.3 Global chains of care

In recent years, there has been a huge growth in demand for domestic workers as well as for carers of children and the elderly. As several chapters in this volume have illustrated, this can be explained by changing labour markets, the increasing numbers of women combining motherhood and paid employment, changing family structures, an ageing population in many societies and the shortage of public care services (Yeates 2005). As many of these caring and domestic jobs are undertaken by migrant women, there is increasing interest in how care chains operate across national borders (Hochschild 2000). Global chains of care may be defined as 'a series of personal links between people across the globe based on the paid or unpaid work of caring' (Hochschild 2000: 131).

The global chains of care paradigm is based on a model of affluent women in the West employing poor migrant women (usually from the South) within their homes as nannies and domestic workers. The paradigm assumes that these migrant women have left families of their own, along with caring responsibilities, behind in the country of origin. The caring of these families is then undertaken by other local women and is likely to involve unpaid caring work within extended families. Thus, the caring of children in affluent Western families is done at the expense of poor children in developing countries. As Yeates (2005: 3) notes:

These processes embody major social divisions and inequalities. Most obviously, they reflect the social divisions of class, wealth, income and status, with richer households located in richer regions or countries outsourcing (part of) their care labour requirements to members of poorer households drawn from poorer areas within the same country or from a poorer country ... it is important to indicate that the outsourcing process is structured by 'race' and ethnicity (and caste) as well as by gender and social class.

Although the global chains of care literature focuses mainly on migrant nannies and child minders, Yeates (2004) argues that professional women, such as migrant nurses, may be particularly implicated in caring roles not only as paid professionals but also, for example, as unpaid carers of ageing relatives 'back home'. This concept may provide a useful tool for understanding the shifting relationships and caring roles within transnational families. While drawing on Yeates' work, Ryan (2007) has suggested that it is necessary to go further and look at how nurses' roles within transnational caring relationships may change over the life course, especially as they have children and require assistance with child-care. Also, through their remittances, these migrant women not only contribute to the economic well-being of their families back home, but also to the wider community and indeed even the national economies of their countries of origin.

Following on from the work of Yeates (2005), it is necessary to highlight some ways in which the concept of global chains of care may be questioned or further developed. Firstly, it is important to state that this is not an entirely new phenomenon. Although women have long made up significant numbers within particular migrant streams – to Britain, for example – there appears to be a historical myopia, even within gender-sensitive approaches to the study of migration. 'The amnesia about past migrations held back... an awareness of female migration and its incorporation into mainstream theories'. This was not only a missed opportunity to incorporate gendered analyses into migration theories in the past, but it also means that current waves of female migrants are often regarded as entirely new and different from earlier migratory movements.

Women have been migrating to work as domestic servants since at least the nineteenth century. Irish women migrated to work as maids in the US (see Diner 1983). In the early twentieth century, such was the massive outflow of young Irish women to work in households in Britain, that the subject was regularly debated in the Irish press and among religious leaders and politicians. In the post-war period, large numbers of young Caribbean and Irish women were recruited to fill specific roles in the British labour force (Ryan & Webster 2008). While the Irish women migrants were usually young and childless, it was common for women from the Caribbean to migrate, leaving their children to be looked after by grandmothers or aunts (Chamberlain 1998). Thus, while the countries of origin may be changing in recent years – a notable example is the Philippines – it is important to acknowledge that the phenomenon of women migrating to work as domestic servants in affluent metropolitan households while leaving children behind, is certainly not a recent practice.

Secondly, in the context of EU enlargement and the massive increase in mobility within the region, especially from the new accession countries, it is important to consider the implications for caring work and transna-

tional caring responsibilities (Morokvasic 2004; Elrick & Lewandowska 2008). What impact will the availability of large numbers of female migrants to undertake caring work have? How will ease of mobility across national borders impact transnational ties and caring 'here' and 'there'?

Thirdly, it is important to question the ways in which transnational families are being constructed in the global chains of care literature. The assumption that migrant women leave young children behind to be looked after by relatives simplifies the diversity of women's experiences. Migrant women may not have children (see also the discussion in Banfi & Boccagni this volume). Their caring responsibilities may involve a range of other relatives, such as aged parents or siblings. In addition, as Yeates (2004, 2005) suggests, moving beyond the narrow focus on migrant women as live-in nannies and maids opens up other possibilities. For example, migrant women may have brought children with them to the host society or they may have had children after their arrival. Some women, especially those who are not live-in domestics may have migrated as part of a conjugal unit and may be living with partners, with or without children.

#### **15.4 Transnational care practices and importance of the family 'here' and 'there'**

In gaining a broader understanding of migration patterns, there is much to be learned by combining the study of migration with family studies. Recent research on migration has helped to complicate previous assumptions about 'the family' as a bounded geographical unit (Baldassar & Baldock 2000). 'Families represent a social group geographically dispersed. They create kinship networks which exist across space and are the conduits for information and assistance which in turn influence migration decisions' (Boyd 1989: 643). Thus, through transnational mobility, families and households become extended through space and time as geographically dispersed relatives form part of 'multi-stranded social relations which link together migrants' societies of origin and settlement' (Baldassar & Baldock 2000: 63).

In the field of migration and, more widely, in the study of transnationalism 'the family' has been recognised as significant in providing some form of support, often through the continuation of familial transnational links (Zontini 2004b; Evergeti 2006). For example, there is some evidence (Baldassar & Baldock 2000; Zontini 2004b; Evergeti 2008) to suggest that migrants' notions of belonging and formulations of their diasporic identities are produced and transformed through participating in family occasions and the continuation of family relationships. Through dynamic and complex interactions the ethnic home and the family (both 'here' and 'there') can provide a basis through which people reproduce and ne-

gotiate cultural values about ethnic identification and caring roles and responsibilities. In order to understand such complex processes and the diversity of transnational caring practices, we need to start with a consideration of 'family' close to the lived experiences of migrants and their non-migrant family members.

Therefore, as has been argued at length elsewhere (Ryan 2008), an examination of families' roles in migration narratives complicates any simplistic notion of the family as a nuclear household unit. While the household unit, defined as a co-resident group, is important in migration research (Boyd 1989: 642), this is not to imply that family-led migration always involves the mobility of entire households. In studying family migration and transnational relationships, perhaps there has been a tendency to adopt the definition of 'the family' used officially in immigration policies, rather than examining the actual diversity with which people migrate through kinship links. 'There has been a tendency to make the family synonymous with the household' and this 'woefully fails to capture the composition and structure of transnational families' (Bryceson & Vuorela 2002: 28). While discussing the diverse roles that families play transnationally, Chamberlain's (1998) work has highlighted the importance of transgenerational and intragenerational links, in particular, those of siblings. Chamberlain (1998: 131-132) argues that:

The conjugal relationship may not always be the focus of a family unit, nor the most important one, and may marginalise the role of siblings and collaterals, the roles of family members located elsewhere, and the importance and nature of families dispersed.

In this respect, we need to adopt a theoretical and methodological stance that explores family as a flexible social practice based on negotiated interchanges and ongoing processes (Pruss 1996). Thus, rather than simple conjugal, nuclear or household units, families involve complex webs of relationships across generations and locations. They are reproduced and redefined through dynamic interactions and the meanings that individuals attach to various familial encounters. Hence, in the context of migration, it is more useful to understand families as 'fluid and constantly being reconstituted and negotiated, adapting across spaces and through time'. Furthermore, it is important to recognise that most migration is related to family in that it often (but not always) entails decisions that involve and have a great impact not just on the migrant, but also other members of his or her family (Nauck & Settles 2001). This is particularly true in the case of caring roles and responsibilities and the way they must be negotiated throughout a lifetime.

Examining the dynamism and fluidity of familial and caring relationships, it may be useful to adopt a life course perspective emphasising how

relationships develop in the context of social roles and change in salience as the individual moves in and out of roles, for example, changing jobs, moving house, becoming a parent or retiring. Viewing social support and the networks that provide it through the lens of a life course perspective focuses attention on the social roles in which personal relationships are formed. Life course events and transitions usually involve a change in social roles and situations, often altering the basis for the social relationships that were formed in the context of the role (Cochan et al. 1990: 182).

While transnational links may remain important for migrants, it is necessary to consider the dynamism of such ties as needs and social relationships change over time. Migrants may adopt strategies that are 'spatially extensive' incorporating 'multiple members in diverse places' (Creese, Dyck & McLaren 1999: 3). Thus, with changing needs and experiences, migrants may draw upon 'local, national and transnational networks that include kin, friends and contacts' (Creese et al. 1999: 4). Growing attention has been paid to the difficulties that child-care can pose for women migrants (Ehrenreich & Hochschild 2003; Salaff & Greve 2004; Zontini 2004a). While some migrant women may leave their children back in the home country to be cared for by relatives, it is apparent that other strategies are also utilised that may involve combinations of local and transnational support. For example, Filipana women in Spain (Zontini 2004a), Chinese women in Canada (Salaff & Greve 2004), Polish women in London (Ryan, Sales, Tilki & Siara 2009) and Indian parents in the US (see Varrel in this volume) may bring grandparents from their home country to look after young children.

Salaff and Greve (2004: 160) argue that 'transnational migration affects women and men in gender specific ways', and places a heavier burden of responsibility on women because they 'undertake the meshing of work and family systems'. Societies rarely acknowledge the informal work that people do to mesh institutional structures. People draw on personal relations to resolve inconsistent demands. The plight of international migrants outlines the problems encountered in using personal solutions to meet public issues (Salaff & Greve 2004: 160).

Transnational caring practices are 'temporal and relational': relational in that they provide a source of identity and support through relational ties and temporal in that they are linked to individual life cycles (Bryceson & Vuorela 2002: 3-30). This is very much connected to what Baldassar (2007: 280) has termed the 'mobility of care'. The mobility of care is informed by the 'negotiated commitments' of migrants and their families back home, as they develop through time, and cultural expectations about caring obligations within the family. The provision of care between migrants and their parents and siblings also depends on capacity (access to resources, time constraints, finances) and the sense of obligation to participate as well as individual negotiated priorities –for example, whether

a migrant has children, can take time off work, has the financial means to travel or send money home.

While relatively young and mobile parents may be a source of practical support in terms of providing care for their grandchildren, with the ageing process comes the possibility that parents may become the recipients of care. Baldassar (2007: 277) argues that few studies 'focus on transnational care giving and ageing'. Caring for sick or elderly relatives may be done in different ways and in different locations. Baldassar (2007: 276) presents a critique of the assumption that caregiving requires proximity.

[E]mpirically, the general pre-occupation with geographical proximity means that very little research has been done on the relationships between ageing parents and adult children who live at a distance, with the result that transnational practices of care have remained largely invisible or are assumed to be unfeasible.

As other research, such as Baldassar and Baldock (2000), has shown, it is possible to undertake some forms of caring at a distance and new technologies such as emails, mobile phones, texting, as well as cheaper air travel have all made that more possible in recent years (Horst 2006). In addition, it is also important to recognise and acknowledge the significant role of the non-migrant family members. In the relevant literature, transnational care is often explored through the perspective of migrants and the kind of support they might provide to their families back home (for an overview, see Baldassar 2007). However, the life stories and experiences of the homeland kin are very important in analysing the different types of transnational care and uncovering the mutuality of support. By looking at the role of those who have stayed behind we can properly acknowledge that care provision at a distance is not unidimensional (that is, from the person who moved away towards those who stayed behind), but can also be multidimensional and often mutual. An examination of the ways in which family members in both places (sending and receiving countries) participate in caring responsibilities has shown that the networks of support are more complex than initially thought (Evereti 2008; Zontini 2007; Ryan 2007). Thus, as in the case of 'family', we need to redefine the concept of 'care', move away from the dominant reification of these notions and adopt a more flexible orientation that will allow us to explore and understand the complex dynamics and the everyday reality of care provision at a distance. In order to do so, we need to take seriously into account the agency of migrants and explore the interpretive schemes that they and their families use in negotiating their lives and their support for each other.

Within our own research, we have found evidence of the varied ways in which migrants are implicated in transnational caring practices, both as recipients and givers of care. Our study of Irish nurses (Ryan 2007)

who migrated to Britain in the post-war period illustrated the ways in which reciprocal transnational caring relationships shift through the life course. After the birth of her first child in the late 1950s, Fiona decided that the best and most flexible career pathway was to become a district nurse. However, she first had to complete her general nursing qualification, which meant further study and training. Fiona achieved her goal with a considerable amount of help from her kinship networks, both local and transnational.

I had my mother with me for a while, I had my mother-in-law with me for a while, oh I had a friend minding [my baby] as well, she'd come here and stay til I came back...My sister was living next door to me at the time and she used to help out. You are always juggling with your children, like I'd mind yours and you'd mind mine. (Fiona, migrated to the UK in 1951)

Reading Fiona's description of her support network, it is easy to forget she is a migrant. As a nurse she was part of a global, or at least transnational, chain of care. While she cared for patients in a London hospital, both her mother and her mother-in-law came from Ireland to help with child-care. In addition, Fiona also appears to have been adept at building and drawing upon local networks. As other researchers have shown, the levels of support available locally may influence the extent to which migrants rely upon transnational networks (Zontini 2004; Salaff & Greve 2004). Apart from her sister, who lived next door, Fiona also had a large number of friends living in the area. In addition, her husband did most of the cooking for the family. Fiona had four children and continued to develop her career, eventually attaining a managerial position. Transnational families can stretch women's caring roles across national boundaries (Zontini 2004; Evergeti 2006, 2008). Irish migrant women are often involved in providing care and support to ageing relatives in Ireland (Walter 2001; Gray 2004). Fiona illustrates the reciprocal nature of transnational caring: in later life, she took on the role of caring for her aged mother who came to live with her in London.

Our study of Greek women in Britain has also shown the changing patterns of transnational caring as people move in both space and time (Evergeti 2006, 2008). In their narratives the research participants referred to the dual responsibilities that they had towards their own families as well as their parental families in Greece. They also described how living faraway from their parents resulted in not having enough support in bringing up and caring for their children.

The first impact on my family through living abroad is a huge lack of help with the kids, especially in the first years, but also to a lesser

degree in older childhood, adolescence. For the children, they have to adjust to new cultures, social settings, habits and peculiarities... They see other kids in extended families and they feel the void. Even more so when my parents come over and then leave. (Miranda, migrated to the UK in 1991)

However, care does not always have to be hands-on. Miranda and other women in the study explained how their home country became an important source of support for themselves and their children. This was notable during the summer and other important holidays when they would go for extended periods of time so their children could enjoy the extended kin and socialise with other members of the family within their own cultural environment. Zontini's (2006, 2007) research on Italian migrant women has revealed similar patterns of transnational caring practices and keeping in touch with the 'home culture'.

In our studies of migrants' narratives, journeys of migration are often described not as one-off movement from the countries of origin to the UK, but as an ongoing dynamic process of self-searching and identity-forming through visits back home and contacts with family and friends both 'here and there'. This ongoing interactional process can also facilitate the mutual provision of care.

I try to go back every few months for ten days or so. This gives me the opportunity to see my ageing mother, but also my other relatives and friends. It's good to keep in touch because this will always be my base and I also make sure my mum is doing OK...at the moment, she doesn't need looking after as such, but it's good for me and for her to have these times together. (Anna, migrated to UK late 1960s)

Such journeys and dual responsibilities are not without conflicts and tensions. Anna explained that she often felt guilty for leaving her four children (though they were all grown-up now) and husband, but she saw spending quality time with her mother as an important component of her filial and cultural obligations.

Other studies of migrancy and transnational care, outside the EU context, have revealed the importance of 'keeping in touch' through 'visiting home'. Exploring the case of Pakistani immigrants in the UK and their families and relatives in Pakistan, Mason (2004) argues that 'the visit' involves a co-presence with people, which has a symbolic and practical importance for creating common family narratives and maintaining the familial relations over space and time. This is a point also made by Baldassar (2007) and Baldassar and Baldock (2000) in their studies of Italian immigrants in Australia. 'Caring' about family from a distance has two important components.



The notion of caring from a distance...incorporates both the practices and emotions of caring (as in caring about exemplified in frequency of contact, the sense of loss when apart, and the importance of return visits) and the practices and emotions of care-giving (as in caring for, through participation in decision-making about issues of health and well-being, and the actual 'hands-on' care-giving during return visits back home). (Baldassar & Baldock 2000: 63)

A recent study of Polish migrants in London illustrated many similar practices of transnational caring (Ryan, Sales, Tilki & Siara 2007). Many people spoke about their regular, even daily, communication with family and friends in Poland via e-mail, texts, cheap phone cards, etc. While these transnational contacts could be an important source of advice or emotional support at a distance, proximity was required for some kinds of hands-on support and assistance. Many of the respondents described how relatives, usually parents, came to London on extended trips to help look after children. When Iza and Staszek had a baby in London they relied on their transnational networks for help with child-care. Iza explained: 'Firstly, my mother-in-law came, when the baby was a month old, and she stayed for six months, and then I asked my mum if she could come... and mum stayed.' For this couple, bringing relatives from Poland to help with child-care is an ideal solution. While transnational contacts are important sources of emotional caring and advice, child-care could not be done at a distance and so, at least temporarily, it necessitated relatives' geographical relocation. Thus, while migrants' social networks may be conceptualised as spatially dispersed, propinquity remains important for certain kinds of support (Wellman 1979; Oakley 1992; Ryan 2007).

However, that is not to underestimate the varied and complex ways in which caring roles could be performed at a distance. Jola, a 57-year-old widow, who works as a nanny in London, presented one of the most poignant examples of transnational caring. Although she had been a teacher in Poland, Jola found it impossible to support herself and her son who suffers from a long-term illness. She describes herself as 'bitter' about the economic situation in Poland. She received no help from the state and had to pay for her son's medication and all his medical expenses out of her own salary. Jola migrated in 2004 out of a sense of desperation, and is convinced that staying in Poland would have resulted in 'a nervous breakdown'. As a live-in nanny, her food and accommodation are provided, so she sends virtually all her wages back to Poland to pay for her son's treatment. As Hochschild (2000) suggests, care provided by migrants in households in affluent societies may lead to a care deficit back in their country of origin. This is a view also supported by the empirical cases discussed in Bonizzoni's chapter in this volume. However, while Jola cares for a child in London, she is unable to take care of her sick son in Poland.

Her story also points to the distinction between caring and caregiving (Baldassar & Baldock 2000). Although she is not physically present to give hands-on care to her son, she cares for him by paying for professional care. She felt that getting a job in London was the only way she could continue to help him. Hence, her migration has not created a care deficit, but rather enabled her to afford professional care for her son. Jola hopes eventually to bring her ill son to join her, though is worried that the money she earns as a nanny will not be enough to keep both of them in London (Ryan et al. 2009).

Boyd (1989) reminds us that transnational familial links are formed and sustained within the context of immigration policies and controls. The lack of immigration restrictions, close geographical proximity and the relative affordability of taking a ferry (in the days before budget airlines) gave Irish migrants the opportunity to create and maintain transnational ties long before most other migrant populations could do so. Nonetheless, freedom of movement and cheap travel within the EU have not only given European migrants increased mobility, but also have consequences for maintaining family relations across borders (Ackers 1998). While such contacts may provide practical support, they can also place increased caring responsibilities on migrant women (Ackers 1998). Far from the unfettered mobility often celebrated in the literature on transnationalism, migration and transnational relations may involve complex and conflicting roles and juggling competing responsibilities in two locations.

In the Polish study, we interviewed a middle-aged migrant named Karolina who had come to London to assist her daughter with child-care. Karolina provided illuminating insights into the potential tensions that transnational caregiving may cause. While she felt obliged to continue caring for her pre-school grandchild in London, Karolina was anxious to return to Poland to care for her sick, elderly mother. Thus, Karolina was caught in transgenerational, transnational caring roles as mother, grandmother and daughter. When we spoke to her these competing responsibilities remained unresolved and were clearly a source of great stress.

## 15.5 Methodological considerations

As illustrated above in our discussion of transnational interactions, there is a need to adopt a flexible theoretical orientation towards 'family' and 'care' that will take into account the inter-subjective and 'processual' nature of the migrant lived experiences (Blumer 1969; Pruss 1996). By attending to the each other's viewpoints, migrants and their families back home develop their lines of action to take into account both their own and other family members' circumstances and caring needs (Evergeti 2008). Often, decisions to move and settle in a new country are inter-subjective in nature. That is, migrants' choices reflect not only their own situation, but also their orientations to their families' perspectives and reality. Exploring migration and transnationalism from such a theoretical stance allows us to realise the impact of migration not only on the person that moves, but also on what Baldassar (2007: 279) calls the 'left-behind kin'.

Such an orientation requires a methodological stance that respects and uncovers the fluidity of changing practices of transnational caring and the interpretive nature of migrant experiences. Recent studies of transnationalism have stepped away from the nation/policy paradigm and have put emphasis on individual migrants and their families 'here and there', thus exploring the everyday realities of migrancy and how those involved in it cope with the demands of distant family relations and caring (Bryceson & Vuorela 2002; Bauer & Thompson 2004; Burrell 2005, 2006; Evergeti 2006, 2008; Evergeti & Zontini 2006). Such studies have highlighted the importance of using a methodology sensitive to the experiences of migrants, such as family narratives, life stories and ethnographic observations (Bauer & Thompson 2004; Christou 2002; Ryan 2002, 2004). However, this is not a new direction in migration research. The importance of biography, life story and narratives was recognised early on within the Chicago School of interactionist research on migrants in the US. *The Polish peasant in Europe and America* by Thomas and Znaniecki (1918-1920) is one of the classic and most influential studies of the Chicago School, with one of the four volumes being entirely devoted to the autobiography of one migrant. This important piece of work has provided us with a methodological scheme of understanding the human experience of living between two cultures from the perspective of the subjects themselves (Blumer 1969). In addition, it is important to acknowledge that the extent to which migrants can operate transnationally is shaped by national policies, for example, on immigration, family reunification and free movement agreements.

Transnational families and caring practices are complex, fluid and dynamic (Castles & Miller 2009). Understanding them requires the use of observational techniques, narratives and ethnographic interviews in order to capture the experiences and emotions of the migrants and their

immediate and distant families (Evergeti 2006). Furthermore, narrative analysis can provide research participants with the opportunity for self-representation by allowing them to relay and reconstruct the everyday experiences of their transnational family ties.

## 15.6 Conclusion

There is growing interest in how migrants, particularly women, are implicated in transnational families. This has led to a consideration of the 'global care chains' as migrants fulfil caring roles as nannies, nurses and maids in affluent societies. While this concept provides a useful tool for understanding the shifting relationships and caring roles within transnational families, the focus on socially disadvantaged female migrants, such as those coming from the South and those 'contained' within domestic settings, underestimates the diversity of migratory experiences and strategies. This chapter focused on migration across the EU. The ability to move across 'open borders' impacts, in particular ways, women's caring roles and responsibilities. Thus, it is important to consider how caring may be mediated through sex, age, family situation and immigration status. Recent work on transnationalism and the migrant family has started exploring the practices of long-distance family relations and, more specifically, the dual responsibilities that migrants and their families may have both 'here and there'. In this chapter we provided a critical review of research on transnationalism and caring practices in which migrants and their kin participate across national borders. We explored different forms of distant care responsibilities and the ways in which these change according to intergenerational relations and the needs of (transnational) family members.

Our discussion has tried to illustrate that in order to understand the fluidity and diversity of migrants' commitments, rather than focusing on broad theorisations of 'transnationalism', we need to explore in detail the practices and processes of long-distance family relations and the caring responsibilities they may entail. Finally, we highlighted the importance of utilising ethnographic and qualitative methods, including narratives and life stories that are sensitive to the everyday reality of transnational family care, capturing both the local and global context of such practices and responsibilities. These arguments have been illustrated with reference to our research on Greek, Irish and Polish migrants and the varied dynamics and shifting of caring relationships throughout the life course.

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